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THESIS

PUBLIC RELATIONS DURING PEACETIME NAVAL DISASTER

by

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PREFACE

The purpose of this study is to provide the United States Navy with guidance for the successful handling of public relations in peacetime naval disasters. It is an examination of the many factors relevant to public relations activity in a disaster situation.

To provide the broadest base possible the author has examined the results of scholarly research on disaster, the salient thoughts of some public relations experts and the public relations activities and plans of certain civilian and government organizations. To formulate meaningful guidance the personal experiences of newsmen, public relations experts and military public information officers has been sought utilizing the interview technique and an open-end questionnaire.

Even in a study of this scope it is not possible to treat each aspect in detail. It is inevitable that certain points have been inadvertently ommitted or have been given only limited attention.

The author is deeply indebted to the many people who gave freely of their time and resources to help him ascertain the facts. The various personnel of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the Atomic Energy Commission, Department of Defense, Office of Civil Defense, Army, and Air Force, were particularly helpful in supplying official directives and pertinent inter-agency data.

The Public Relations Society of America and Mr. Robert L. Barbour, Editor of the PR Reporter, provided much material concerning disaster public relations. Civilian research organizations forwarded detailed reports which contributed materially to the

discussion of human behavior in disaster; notably Human Sciences Research, Inc. of McClean, Va., and the Disaster Research Center at Ohio State University.

A special thanks to Mrs. Wilmar B. Day, file supervisor in the Office of Information, Navy Department, who not only made her files available but permitted the author to study at his leisure, hundreds of historical documents.

LCDR David M. Cooney, USN made the only carbon copy of his new book, "A Chronology of the U. S. Navy -- 1775-1965" available to the author prior to its publication. The Chronology of Naval Disaster appended to this study (Appendix C) was, for the most part, excerpted from Commander Cooney's detailed presentation.

Mr. John R. Blewer, Director of Public Relations for the Texas Gas Transmission Corporation supplied copies of the manual "Meet The Press" and his permission to include it as an appendix to this study.

In addition to the many active duty and retired Navy Information Officers who contributed their experience and support to this study the author is particularly grateful to one of their number. The major point of contact with the Office of Information in the Navy Department was Commander Robert S. Jones, USN, Director of the Plans Division in that Office. He answered a multitude of detailed queries and demonstrated that no piece of information was impossible to obtain.

In addition to hours spent in interview, Mr. Roy Popkin, Assistant to the Director of Disasters Services, the American National Red Cross provided valuable materials which greatly contributed to this study.

I must pay special thanks to Mr. Albert W. Lounsbury an insurance consultant and friend who specializes in analyzing predictable hazards which might result in physical

disaster or financial impairment to U. S. and foreign companies. He spent dozens of evening hours objectively examining the author's work. If the passages which follow have understandable continuity it is due in great part to his help and interest.

Finally, if this study makes some contribution to the practice of public relations in naval disaster it is due in large measure to the supernatural understanding, confidence and inspiration offered by my wife, Peggy. Aside from the daily tasks associated with managing five children and at times an unreasonable and frustrated husband, she managed to proof-read, type and retype tangled roughs, and otherwise assist me in surviving the ordeal of research and composition.

The cooperation of all these organizations and individuals is gratefully acknowledged. The contents of this study, however, rests entirely with the author. It should be specifically noted that the conclusions and recommendations do not necessarily constitute the official views of the Department of the Navy.

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CHAPTER I

DISASTER..WHAT IT IS AND HOW HUMAN BEHAVIOR IS AFFECTED BY IT

This is a study of disaster for the United States Navy. It relates previous disaster research to the special problems of public relations in naval disasters.

To establish the main points relative to disaster and the Navy, a substantive background is needed. A brief history of disaster research and a discussion of the most prevalent phenomena found by disaster studies will be presented.

This study also examines the actions taken in past disasters to enable the Navy to react with a greater degree of confidence and effectiveness in future naval disasters.

Disaster Defined

It must be understood before anything else that disasters are abnormal, not normal occurrences. They are, therefore, inherently newsworthy.

The concept of disaster varies with the kind and degree of ego involvement of the persons or groups concerned. The word "disaster" signifies one thing to the family or community involved, another to the disaster research scientist, and still something different to the governmental agency or voluntary relief organization charged with relief and rehabilitation measures. Webster says, "Disaster

implies an unforseen mischance bringing with it destruction of life and property...; sudden and extraordinary misfortune; a calamity." One sophisticated definition states that disaster is "A disruption in the normal flow of energy that is uncontrolled."[1]

In reference to communities, one writer has said:

> Disaster means the impinging upon a structured community of an external force capable of destroying human life or its resources for survival, on a scale wide enough to excite public alarm, to disrupt normal patterns of behavior, and to impair or overload any of the central services necessary to the conduct of normal affairs or to the prevention or alleviation of suffering and loss. Usually, the term disaster refers to an episode with tragic consequences to a substantial portion of the population.[2]

The American Red Cross defines disaster as follows:

> Disaster means a great national catastrophe such as a flood, tornado, or hurricane, and also a sudden extraordinary catastrophe such as fire, explosion, transportation wreck, or similar public calamity in which numbers of persons are plunged into helplessness and suffering.[3]

In examining these few definitions, it would appear that disasters, regardless of how or by whom defined, have certain common attributes. They

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[1]L. V. Berkner, "The Common Aspects of Disaster," an unpublished address given at The American Association For The Advancement of Science Symposium on Disaster Recovery, St. Louis, Mo., December 27, 1952.

[2]John Walker Powell, "An Introduction To The Natural History of Disaster," unpublished report of the Psychiatric Institute, University of Maryland, 1954.

[3]Interview with Roy S. Popkin, Assistant to the National Director, Disaster Services of the American Red Cross, Washington, D. C., May 27, 1965.

include injury, suffering, and/or death for several people and damage or destruction to possessions and property. Peacetime disasters considered according to their origins are of two main types; naturally occurring and man-made.[1]

There is no definition for military or naval disaster contained in the official military dictionary.[2] However, any definition of peacetime naval disaster would only differ from those listed above in the application of terms to naval personnel, equipment, or installations. In terms of this study it must also be remembered that naval disasters differ in the scope of public interest and concern. A naval disaster in any locale provokes the interest of the entire country since Navy personnel come from all corners of the United States. A Navy ship involved in collision, for instance, may very well have representatives from all fifty states in her crew.

Other Means of Describing Disaster

In addition to the two general classes of disaster, natural and man-made, there are other descriptive differences which are helpful to consider.

Disasters differ in:

- The degree of their predictability.
- The degree of their probability.
- The degree of their controlability.
- The nature of the precipitating agent.
- Their origin.
- Their speed of onset.

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[1]Hoyt Lemons, "Physical Characteristics of Disasters: Historical and Statistical Review," The Annals of The American Academy of Political and Social Science, Vol. 309, January, 1957, p. 1.

[2]Joint Chiefs of Staff, Dictionary of United States Military Terms for Joint Usage, JCS Publication #1 (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1964).

- Their scope.
- Their destructive effects on people and physical objects.[1]

Of special interest to the Public Information Officer (hereafter referred to as P.I.O.) is a discussion of how human behavior differs in relation to these particular features of disaster. Research has discovered that human behavior not only differs in relation to each of the features of disaster we have discussed above, but also differs within a particular disaster by:

- Spatial zones.
- Time periods.
- Type of involvement.
- Prior preparation and conditioning.[2]

In a brief descriptive treatment such as this, it is not possible to discuss each of these differences and all the effects which disaster may have on human behavior. The many variables are presented to illustrate that human behavior in a disaster situation is a complex phenomenon.

Categorizing Disaster

There does not seem to be a commonly accepted system of categorizing disasters beyond the two main divisions -- man-made or naturally caused. For operational purposes, however, the Red Cross recognizes the following types:

- Hurricanes.
- Tornadoes.
- Other windstorms.
- Floods.
- Flash floods.
- All other storms (hail storms, snowstorms, etc.).

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[1]Charles E. Fritz, "Disaster," Contemporary Social Problems, ed. Robert K. Merton and Robert A. Nisbet, (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1961), p. 656.

[2]Ibid.

- Explosions.
- Fires.
- Wrecks (train, ship, airplane, etc.).
- Other disasters (earthquakes, landslides, etc.).[1]

History of Disaster Research

In 1950 a concerted effort to study human behavior in disasters began in a systematic way. Since that time there have been numerous opportunities to test the validity of the many popular conceptions concerning disaster behavior. These studies have also tested the more scientific hypotheses relevant to human behavior under conditions of stress and crisis. The Disaster Research Group (formerly the Committee on Disaster Studies) of the National Research Council, National Academy of Sciences, has for instance, prepared a series of nineteen disaster studies which report the effects of natural and man-made disasters on human behavior. There is currently a group of scholars and researchers engaged in a similar fulltime study at the Disaster Research Center at Ohio State University. Other private organizations such as Human Sciences Research, Inc, of McLean, Virginia, are performing similar research primarily under government contracts.

While most research on Human behavior in disaster has been accomplished in the last fifteen years, there were some efforts in this area prior to that time. Between World Wars I and II the first studies were carried out which attempted to test or apply some of the systematic concepts of the social and behavioral sciences.

In 1920 S. H. Prince in Catastrophe and Social Change presented a study of certain social phenomena following the explosion of a munitions vessel in Halifax

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[1] Popkin, op. cit.

Harbor. This study, considered a pioneering effort in disaster research, examined effects caused by the explosion of 450,000 tons of TNT occasioned by the ramming of the munitions ship in the early morning of December 6, 1917. In severe winter weather, the explosion caused a seismic shock which created a six foot tidal wave. The shattering blast, the resultant fires and the wave killed over 2,000 people.[1]

Twenty years later, in 1940 Hadley Cantril made a unique study of the reactions to the widely acclaimed radio broadcast which simulated an "Invasion From Mars."[2] In this study the researcher performed a significant psychological analysis of human behavior under the simulated threat of a terrifying disaster. He was particularly concerned with the reasons for panic.

In analyzing interview data from 135 persons, most of whom were upset by the broadcast, Cantril concluded that lack of critical ability was the key factor in the panic. He further ascertained that critical ability was related to education attainment.[3]

It was only after World War II that actual programs of disaster research began to take shape. The motivation for beginning these disaster studies was the demonstrated effects of nuclear weapons and the realization that they could be used again. Government agencies with the responsibility of planning for the hazards of a nuclear age began to organize and support research that would advance the knowledge

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[1]George J. Palmer, Jr., Individuals And Groups in Disaster, Schematic Analyses of Disaster Literature, Institute of Behavioral Research, Texas Christian University Topical Series Report N. 4b, June, 1963, p. B-90.

[2]Hadley Cantril, Hazel Gaudet, and Herta Herzog, The Invasion From Mars (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1940).

[3]Robert E. Lane and David O. Sears, Public Opinion (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1964), p. 80.

and understanding of human beings in situations of acute stress and wholesale destruction. Several studies were undertaken to examine the disastrous bombings which had occurred in Great Britain, Germany, and Japan. At about the same time, a number of similar studies were begun to examine human behavior in disasters from natural causes.

In 1952 at the request of the Armed Services, the National Academy of Sciences-National Research Council appointed a Committee on Disaster Studies (reorganized in 1957 as the Disaster Research Group). With the backing of several federal agencies and private foundations this committee set out to encourage research on human problems during disaster and to advance communication and planning among students of disaster. It also provided consultative services to such agencies as the Federal Civil Defense Administration. From its inception this Group has supported a wide-range of studies in the disaster area. Since it is not possible to study human reaction to disaster in a controlled laboratory situation, most of the studies undertaken have utilized the frequent opportunities given by natural disasters of all sorts. Most are field studies carried out in stricken communities as soon as possible after the impact of tornadoes, floods, explosions, and similar catastrophic events.

The 1961 inventory by the Disaster Research Group of field studies lists the following numbers of disasters treated:

- Twenty tornadoes.
- Thirteen fires and explosions.
- Twelve floods.
- Twelve hurricanes and typhoons.
- Eight earthquakes.
- Eight incidents involving poisonous or asphyxiating chemicals.

- Six false alerts.
- Five epidemics or threatened outbreaks.
- Four airplane crashes.
- Three blizzards.
- Two mine disasters.
- Six miscellaneous emergencies.
- Eleven civil defense exercises.[1]

The total number of recorded interviews available from these studies is 14,461. In addition, research on World War II bombings involved 7, 163 interviews.[2]

In recent years there has been more activity initiated in this area. Organizations such as the National Opinion Research Center, The Disaster Research Center at Ohio State University, and commercial companies such as the Human Sciences Research Inc. have led the field.

Why It Is Important To Study Disaster

The impetus for research studies of human behavior in disaster developed from two interrelated practical needs:

A. To secure more adequate protection for the nation from the destructive and disruptive consequences of potential atomic, biological, and chemical attack.

B. To produce the maximal amount of disruption to the enemy in the event of war.[3]

While the financial backing is prompted by our society's necessary preoccupation with nuclear warfare, disaster studies provide useful guidance in

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[1]Dwight W. Chapman, "A Brief Introduction to Contemporary Disaster Research," Man And Society in Disaster, ed. George W. Baker and Dwight W. Chapman (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1962), p. 5.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Fritz, op. cit., p. 653.

preventing or alleviating the stress and suffering of disaster. This practical goal is itself worth pursuing.

Products of Disaster Research

The first research task was to break disaster down into meaningful sections. It was determined that disaster can be usefully systematized by reference to typical periods of time within the course of the disaster. The seven time phases of disaster generally accepted and followed by most researchers today, are:

A. Warning - during which there arises, mistakenly or not, some apprehension based on conditions out of which danger may arise.

B. Threat - during which people are exposed to communications from others or to signs from the approaching disaster force itself indicating specific, imminent danger.

C. Impact - during which the disaster strikes with concomitant death, injury and destruction.

D. Inventory - during which those exposed to the disaster begin to form a preliminary picture of what has happened and of their own condition.

E. Rescue - in which activity turns to immediate help for survivors, first aid for the wounded, freeing trapped victims, fighting fires, etc.

F. Remedy - during which more deliberate and formal activities are undertaken toward relieving the stricken and their community, both by survivors and by the outside relief agencies that have now moved into the scene.

G. Recovery - during which, for an extended period, the community and the individuals in it either recover their former stability or achieve a stable adaptation to the changed conditions which the disaster has brought about.[1]

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[1]Chapman, op. cit., pp. 7-8.

These divisions are helpful to the P.I.O. who must have some general understanding of disasters. Phases C. through G. would be of particular interest to the military information officer who is mostly concerned with man-made disaster.

Human Behavior In Disaster

On Friday, October 16th, 1953, the aircraft carrier USS LEYTE tied to a dock in the Boston Naval Shipyard had an explosion in a catapult machinery space. The blast killed 37 and injured 28. Included in the casualty lists were Navy and Marine Corps personnel and civilian workmen.[1]

On the morning of May 26, 1954, the aircraft carrier USS BENNINGTON was enroute from Norfolk, Virginia to the Narraganset Bay operating area. About 6:15 A.M. the ship was shaken by a series of violent explosions. Ranking among the worst disasters in Navy history, the explosions and ensuing fires killed 103 crewmen and left more than 100 injured.[2]

On April 10, 1963 the nuclear powered submarine USS THRESHER was conducting the last of a series of tests 225 miles east of Cape Cod. She submerged at 8:00 A.M. The submarine with her crew of 108 and 21 civilian technicians was never seen again.[3]

How do human beings react when they are involved in or vitally concerned with such disasters?

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[1] Boston Daily Globe, October 17, 1953, p. 1.

[2] Boston Evening Globe, May 26, 1954, p. 1.

[3] The Boston Globe, April 11, 1963, p. 1.

According to one overemphasized concept, they panic. They trample each other in a wildeyed drive to escape. They have no sense of concern for their fellow human beings. This image has been reinforced by articles, books, movies and television. However, as Fritz and Williams point out in their study on the Human Being in Disasters:

> Those experienced in actual disasters are able to reject this picture as a product of ignorance, inaccurate observation, and fertile imagination. In more subtle form, however, stereotypes of this kind influence the thinking of disaster officials and experts and affect their plans and operations. This imagery, therefore, affects both the general public and persons who are responsible for protecting and helping the public in case of disaster.[1]

The news media may be influenced by the same falacious image of human actions during a disaster. The P.I.O. must remember this point in dealing with the news media and insure to the best of his ability that an accurate image is projected.

As a result of the scores of domestic and foreign peacetime disaster studies, there is now emerging a much clearer, more fundamental understanding of both the typical human responses to disaster and the recurrent human problems of disaster planning and management. This research is of great importance and of more than passing interest to the P.I.O. who will stand between those caught in the disaster and the general public.

Preparation and Disruption

It has been determined that the degree of disruption caused by a disaster will be largely determined by the degree to which people have developed realistic

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[1]Charles E. Fritz and Harry B. Williams, "The Human Being in Disasters: A Research Perspective," The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, Vol. 309 (January, 1957), p. 42.

expectations about and preparations for disaster.

In every society some kinds of disaster are anticipated.[1]

As one student of disaster has pointed out:

> There is probably no society in which there is not some knowable possibility of disaster. These possibilities include:
>
> - Accident - eg., where there are chemicals, there can be explosion.
> - A persistent but presently inactive danger - eg., a volcano.
> - Recurring danger - eg., river floods; and
> - A unique danger - eg., nuclear attack.[2]

It has also been found that it is extremely difficult to establish an adequate state of preparation under ordinary conditions. This is especially true when there has been no recent experience with disaster and the threat therefore seems highly indefinite or uncertain.[3]

United States citizens, for instance, have been generally apathetic toward the building of air raid shelters. This is probably true because the future conditions of nuclear attack are painful to contemplate. There are no present rewards for the personal costs and sacrifices involved in making preparation or realistic ways of testing whether the preparedness measures are effective. There seems to be much time before one must make a decision and there is no apparent

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[1] Fritz, op. cit., p. 659.

[2] Harry B. Williams, "Communication in Community Disaster" (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 1956), p. 68.

[3] Fritz, op. cit., p. 663.

way to cope with the problem by use of present resources.

The important point with respect to public relations in naval disaster is that people and society, while aware that disaster is a possibility, are seldom if ever ready for its impact.

Social Disorganization

People evidence a number of predictable reactions in a disaster situation which should be understood by the P.I.O. who will assist the media in reporting what is happening. Unfortunately there are a great many disruptive activities during most disasters which are misunderstood. While the behavior is typical it is misinterpreted in most instances. For instance, the notion that people "typically" panic, become hysterical or "go to pieces" in the presence of danger is not at all supported by disaster research findings. Western culture often equates flight with cowardice and the absence of flight with bravery, while obscuring the fact that flight is often the only rational choice that individuals can make if they wish to live. There is an old Chinese saying which expresses an opposite value judgement about flight: "Of the thirty-six ways to escape danger, running away is best."[1]

Another sterotype common among the publics outside a disaster is the belief that disasters render people a dazed and helpless mass, completely dependent on outside aid for guidance and organization. Research findings show that the contrary is ture -- that many of the immediate and pressing tasks of rescue and relief are accomplished by the survivors themselves. It was further found that if a

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[1]C. C. Culmsee, "Tight Little Island of China," New York Times Magazine, August 19, 1956, p. 66.

disaster-struck community is isolated for some time, it will develop forms of emergency organization to cope with the given problems.[1]

Unfortunately, the lack of a familiar, normal pattern of uniform activity often leads the outsider to the erroneous conclusion that the disaster population has "panicked". What is actually being observed is not panic, but social disorganization, i.e., uncoordinated activity on a general, community-wide or internal societal level. It is most important for the P.I.O. to recognize that this social disorganization need not indicate personal or small group disorganization. On the contrary, many individuals and small groups are acting with specialized or limited purpose and considerable control to solve the problems they immediately face. Since their attention is apt to be focused on the immediate tasks at hand they appear oblivious to the more general needs that have arisen as a result of the disaster.

Repeated research has determined that two common human responses initially contribute to this form of social disorganization:

1. The initial tendency to particularize and personalize the disaster; to think of it as happening only to oneself and as being confined to one's immediate environment.

2. The anxiety and concern for the welfare of family members, other kin, and intimates.[2]

The second and more persistent, source of disorganization listed above is of particular interest to this study. The survivors (military dependents for instance) begin a desperate search for missing persons or for information about their whereabouts and condition. Hundreds or thousands of people seeking information

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[1] Fritz, op. cit., p. 675.

[2] Ibid.

concerning their intimates greatly contributes to the confusion usually observed in a disaster situation.

Role Conflict

One inevitable human reaction to disaster is that of "role conflict". It is largely caused by the separation anxiety noted above. Lewis M. Killian, a noted disaster researcher has this to say about "role conflict":

> When catastrophe strikes a community, many individuals find that the latent conflict between ordinarily non-conflicting group loyalties suddenly becomes apparent and that they are faced with the dilemma of making an immediate choice between various roles. In all the communities (studied) there were individuals, such as policemen, firemen, and public utilities workers, whose loved ones were threatened by the same disaster that demanded their services as "trouble shooters." Even persons who had such definite roles to play in time of catastrophe were confronted with the alternatives of seeing after only their own primary groups or of assisting in the rescue and relief of any of the large number of injured persons, regardless of identity. Indeed, only the unattached person in the community was likely to be free of such a conflict.[1]

Research has demonstrated that most people quickly resolve the conflict in favor of loyalty first to their families or other intimates, and only then turn their attention to larger and more impersonal social group loyalties. For people who have clearly defined responsibilities in the disaster, however, the conflict often persists and causes profound psychological disturbances.[2] In short, a great many people involved in or working around a disaster are not "themselves", for a number

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[1]Lewis M. Killian, "The Significance of Multiple-Group Membership in Disaster," American Journal of Sociology, Vol 57, No. 4 (January, 1952), pp. 309-14.

[2]Ibid.

of very good reasons. The P.I.O. who will interview, work alongside, or otherwise depend on such distraught individuals should keep the concept of "role conflict" firmly in mind.

Convergence Behavior

A major problem of coordination and control in disasters emenates not from the victims, but from the informal, spontaneous "convergence action" of persons living outside the disaster area. Here again, contrary to popular conception of behavior in disasters, movement toward the disaster area is usually more significant than flight or evacuation from it. In a very short period of time there are many more people in the disaster area than there were before the disaster occurred. Within minutes people begin to converge on the immediate area and on first aid stations, hospitals, relief centers, and communication centers near the area.[1] In addition to this physical movement of persons, incoming messages of anxious inquiry and offers of help from all parts of the country, and even from foreign countries, begin to overload existing telephone, telegraph, and other communication and information facilities.

Of particular interest is a closely related phenomenon called, "informational convergence." Following the Waco, Texas, tornado on May 11th, 1953, a study was made by the Department of Sociology at the University of Texas. Here is a portion of what they found:

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[1]Fritz, op. cit., p. 678.

> ...the long distance dial system in Waco was set up to handle 100 telephone calls simultaneously, but two to three hours after the tornado the incoming calls were so numerous that outgoing calls had to be delayed as much as six hours. So great was the jam, the manager of the Waco office phoned the National Broadcasting Company in New York to broadcast an appeal to the nation asking that calls into Waco be restricted to real emergency messages. In the twenty-four hour period immediately following the disaster, the telephone company handled 22,420 long distance calls (both incoming and outgoing). The normal load for a similar period was approximately 45% less than this. Likewise, so many messages flowed through the local telegraph office that five additional substations had to be opened. A total of nearly 37,000 were handled on the day following the tornado, compared with a normal day average of about 1,000 messages. A similar heavy flow of messages is noted for the post office, the commercial radio stations, the "Ham" radio operators, and the Military Affiliate Radio System.[1]

The problem of controlling convergence is often too narrowly conceived as one of blocking or restraining "sightseers", "looters", and other "unauthorized personnel". Many have the mistaken notion that people who converge on a disaster area from the outside have exploitation motives. However, the incidence of looting and other forms of exploitation actually found in disasters is slight when compared with actions motivated by anxiety over missing relatives and friends. Sympathy for the stricken population, a real desire to help, and interest in an unusual or unfamiliar event are also causes of convergence. To meet these needs in a sensible manner, the disaster management, and in particular the P.I.O. must provide adequate information, positive direction, and guidance, rather than indiscriminate restraint.

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[1]Harry E. Moore et al., "Waco-San Angelo Disaster Study: Report Of Second Year's Work" (Unpublished report, Department of Sociology, University of Texas, 1955).

Disasters As Unifying Force

Disaster studies have shown that man is a highly adaptive social animal when confronted with direct threats to his continued existence.[1] Repeated research has shown that disasters quickly unify societies. This was noted when William James reported on the San Francisco earthquake in 1906. He testified to a sense of reassurance about human nature stemming from the rapidity with which people improvised order out of chaos. He was also pleased by the "universal equanimity" of the survivors.[2] Many research projects from that time until this (notably, several recent studies by the Ohio State University Disaster Research Center) have confirmed these earlier observations.

Contacting such a strongly unified society from the "outside", particularly when in the company of news media representatives can represent an additional threat to a wounded society. The P.I.O. may be considered an intruder, come to pry or drive a wedge into a solidly unified group. He must therefore act with decorum, tact, and understanding -- and above all, restrain those with him from antagonizing the victims. If the P.I.O. can establish himself as an ally of the striken society rather than a potential enemy, he will most probably serve that community, his organization, and the media in a positive and constructive manner.

Situational Therapeutic Features And Adjustments

Out of each thing bad, there seems to come some good. World War II helped accelerate work in the fields of medical research, air transportation, etc.

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[1] Fritz, op. cit., p. 683.

[2] William James, Memories and Studies (New York: Longmans, Green, 1911).

Some good also seems to emenate from a disaster particularly in the area of community action and improved social interaction. One sociologist calls them situational therapeutic features and adjustments.[1] While much too complex to treat in depth here, they are listed in brief to help form a better understanding of the social aspects of disaster.

Situational Therapeutic Features:

An essential feature of disaster is that the threats and dangers to the society come from outside the system and their causes can be clearly perceived and specified. Disasters give people an external, objectively specifiable source of worry and concern toward which action can be directed.

The remedial needs in disaster -- the needs for rescue, clearance of debris, rebuilding, etc. -- are immediate and imperative needs which are also clearly specifiable in the external environment, and toward which direct physical action can be directed to produce readily discernible results. In disasters, needs and need fulfillment are so closely related, so evidently imperative for human survival, and so widespread in import that consensus is readily achieved.

Disaster provides an unstructured social situation that enables persons and groups to perceive the possibility of introducing desired innovations into the social system. Changes and adjustments made during the emergency period give proof that the restructuring or changing of the social system is possible. People see the opportunity of realizing certain wishes which remained latent and unrealizable under the old system. The possibility that these changes in the culture may be affected or continued lends a positive aspect to disasters not normally realizable in other types of stress situations.

Culturally derived discriminations and social distinctions tend to be eliminated in disaster because all groups and statuses in the society are indiscriminately affected; danger, loss, and sufffering become public rather than private phenomena. This is the one feature which distinguishes disaster from other forms of crises. Since the disaster comes from outside the social system and indiscriminately affects persons of all groups, there is a temporary breakdown in social class, ethnic group, and other hierarchical status distinctions, and a general democratization of the social structure.[1]

Therapeutic Adjustments to Disaster:

Pre-existing values and norms and future goals are sloughed off and viewed as irrelevant, ie. values and norms are emergent rather than preordained. Disasters provide a temporary liberation from the worries, inhibitions, and anxieties associated with the past and the future because they force people to concentrate their full attention on immediate moment-to-moment and day-to-day needs.

The widespread sharing of danger, loss, and deprivation produces an intimate, primary group solidarity among survivors, which overcomes social isolation and provides a channel for intimate communication and expression and a major source of physical and emotional support and reassurance. The capacity of human societies under severe stress situations to contract from a highly elaborated set of secondary group organizations to a kind of universal primary group (family-like) existence is probably their central built-in protective mechanism.

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[1] Ibid.

Disasters are profoundly dramatic events, and as such absorb peoples attention; provide a medium for the build-up and release of emotions, and become collective representations or symbols by which past, present, and future happenings become rated and dated, Much of the dramatic effect of disasters results from the fact that they compress social processes into a short time span, making them more visible than in normal times -- and provide a socially sanctioned opportunity to act out basic human needs.

All of these adaptive mechanisms in disaster-struck societies help explain why communities rebound so dramatically from the disruptive and destructive effects of disaster.

When Panic Can Occur

While the panic stereotype which describes human behavior in a disaster situation is commonly a false conception, there are times when genuine panic may occur. So that actual panic may be recognized, the circumstances surrounding or precipitating this condition should be familiar to the P.I.O. Fritz and Williams while associated with the Committee on Disaster Studies of the National Academy of Sciences -- National Research Council listed the following conditions under which panic is most likely to occur:

1. When people perceive an immediate, severe danger.
2. When they believe there is only one or at best a limited number of escape routes from danger.

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[1] Ibid.

3. When they believe those escape routes are closing (not closed) so that escape must be made quickly.

4. When there is a lack of communication to keep them informed of the situation.[1]

Coordination And Control

From what has been presented concerning human behavior in disaster, it is understandable why control and coordination during the rescue and relief period in a disaster are difficult to achieve. As has been noted, the amount of confusion in disasters is often overemphasized; nevertheless, it does exist to some degree. There are a number of factors which give root to this confusion.

- The physical disorganization of the disaster-stricken area.

- Darkness, if the rescue and relief effort is conducted at night.

- The effects of convergence behavior.

- A great sense of urgency to act, to get something done to help the victims, which makes taking the time to communicate and coordinate decisions seem a luxury.

- The fact that under stress it is difficult to exercise the more complex intellectual processes, such as looking ahead and thinking about the indirect consequences of a decision -- except for the highly trained and experienced and those few individuals who become unusually efficient in crisis.

- Lack of workable, pre-existing plans on a community-wide basis.

- Inadequate communication, partly because of the destruction of communication facilities, but more generally because of inadequate and improper use of these facilities.

- Ambiguity concerning what official or agency has the authority for certain decisions.

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[1]Fritz and Williams, op. cit., p. 44.

- The absence of an agreed-upon, understood division of labor among different groups and agencies.

- The occurrence sometimes (though not as often as rumors would suggest) of disputes concerning authority, responsibilities, and jurisdictions.

- The lack of systematic reconnaissance and other procedures for maintaining a central strategic over-view of the problem.

- The lack of essential central coordinating mechanisms such as means of coordinating requests for supplies.[1]

Conclusion

Disasters present a great many problems in human management, but they are not insurmountable ones. An increased number of research studies, particularly in recent years, have served to identify many of the functional and dysfunctional human actions in the different phases of disaster. In so doing they have provided disaster workers, with a more adequate base for anticipating and understanding human needs and reactions. More importantly, they have provided information on which realistic and effective plans for disaster may be made.

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[1] Ibid., p. 47.

CHAPTER II

PUBLIC RELATIONS AND DISASTER

There are a number of highly skilled people professionally trained in public relations. Some of them are experts on the specific problems of public relations in disaster. Primarily these individuals come from civilian organizations, government agencies, and components of the armed services which have either experienced disaster or recognize the possibility of it occurring.

An examination of what some experts have said about public relations in disaster provides partial basis for later recommendations. The public relations plans and activities of certain organizations offer guidelines for similar undertakings within the United States Navy.

Why PR in a Disaster

We have said that disaster is an abnormal event which is inherently newsworthy. The public wants to know what has happened, when it happened, where it happened and most importantly, why it happened. They want to know who was injured, who was killed, who were the heroes, and who was to blame. In the case of a government agency or military service, the public not only wants to know -- it demands to know. And in a democratic society it is their constitutional and moral right to know. It is the obligation of public officials to assure that the right is maintained. It is the duty of the P.I.O. to assist the public in obtaining the facts, and to assist officials in fulfilling their obligations.

One public relations expert has recently said: "The most critical hours in a PR director's entire career may face him when disaster strikes, and how he then handles his responsibilities can determine for a long time to come what the public thinks of his organization and what the organization thinks of him."[1]

In the interviews conducted by the author with public relations counselors and practitioners, newsmen, and military information officers, the concept of planning inevitably was mentioned. The experts were unanimous in agreeing that the most important actions taken by the public relations man in a disaster were those taken weeks or months in advance -- planning. Most recommended a written disaster plan to cover as many contingencies as could be conjured up in the comparative peace of daily routine.

One major reason for a disaster plan is that headlines will certainly follow a disaster. It is one of the times when P.I.O. will not need to seek newspaper space or air time. Communications handling under sudden stress is difficult at best and subject to many serious pitfalls at the very time when positive handling is most important. Misguided headlines can, and often do ignore the volatile atmosphere created by the disaster when communications handling is inept or delayed due to indecision or procrastination. Whatever the nature of the disaster, it imposes a large number of unusual and sometimes extraordinary problems. It requires split-second decisions, coordination of effort, and the application of techniques adapted to the special purposes of the moment.[2]

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[1]Robert L. Barbour, PR Reporter, Vol. 8, No. 16 (April 19, 1965), 1.

[2]PR Reporter, Vol. 5, No. 37 (December 10, 1962), 1.

Mr. Odom Fanning is a public relations man with a great deal of experience as a communicator. He has served as the Director of Information for the Columbia Broadcasting System Laboratories in Stamford, Conn., has been a science reporter, a public health information officer, and was with the Midwest Research Institute. He has this to say about public relations in a disaster situation:

> Years of public relations can be toppled in a moment under the stress of an emergency. By running routine publicity, the media feel that they are banking goodwill toward the day when the organization has a really newsworthy story. The chances are good that such a story will involve an emergency -- explosion, fire, homicide, suicide, embezzlement or the like. Management instinctively recoils at the thought of publicity on any such 'unfavorable' incident. Management should face up to the fact that a dramatic happening almost automatically comes to public attention, and neither press nor public relations man has any option over whether the news will be published. The bad must be told with the good. Even the recent President of the United States (President Eisenhower) and his late Secretary of State leveled with the press and the people at their moments of health crisis. The space race with Russia has certainly not been slowed, and may have been speeded, through frankness in reporting our failures at Cape Canaveral. The U-2 plane incident -- scarcely good public relations -- was made worse when officials hedged about the facts at the outset.[1]

While media and public interest are assured in a disaster situation, public relations in disasters are handled in a variety of ways by different organizations and for different reasons.

Disaster PR Means Different Things To Different People

When a disaster like a destructive hurricane strikes a large community

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[1]Odom Fanning, "Planning and Candor - Key Words In An Emergency," Public Relations Journal, March, 1961, p. 23.

a number of organizations, industrial concerns, public utilities, relief groups, etc., all have their own special PR problems. They all must handle their disaster public relations in a different way, ie., each has its own objectives.

Worcester, Massachusetts, one of the leading industrial centers of New England was suddenly struck by a tornado on the afternoon of June 9, 1953. This is in an area usually free of tornadoes. The twister killed 91 persons, injured hundreds, did property damage estimated at almost $60 million, and left 10,000 people homeless.[1]

Contributions of each of the industrial firms affected by the tornado are too numerous to cite individually. However, each company rallied to the common cause. The actions taken by the American Steel and Wire Company are singled out as exemplifying the attitude of all the companies in the disaster area.

Itself untouched by the tornado, the American Steel and Wire Company rushed 13 teams of eight men each into stricken areas with trucks, bulldozers, cranes and other heavy equipment along with a fully staffed ambulance. When everything that could be done on an emergency basis was finished on one street, they moved on to help the next.[2] Similar assistance was offered by many other companies. At the same time their PR men were busy supplying information to Worcester's two newspapers and four radio stations to inform employees regarding disaster headquarters and employment notices.

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[1]Elliott B. Knowlton, "Disaster and PR...," Public Relations Journal, September, 1953, p. 12.

[2]Ibid., p. 13.

In addition to community disaster relief activities, the PR men had other pressing duties to perform. The economic survival of many individual companies was in the balance. The Public Relations director of The Norton Company, a large Worcester firm, had this to say about disaster PR:

> There were lessons learned too during the disaster. For example, public relations men should bear in mind that first eye-witness accounts of a disaster are the ones that hit the wires and are most likely to be remembered longest. Often they can be exaggerated or incorrect, and leave the reader with the impression that a whole company was completely wiped out instead of one plant badly damaged. To prevent large scale cancellations of orders or anxiety regarding orders, it is important to keep customers in other parts of the country correctly informed. PR men should inform the wire services promptly of the true situation rather than let newsmen get their reports from uninformed passersby.[1]

A public utilities company has a somewhat different PR problem under similar circumstances. In the fall of 1954 two hurricanes struck New England within a period of ten days. Each one knocked out a quarter of a million telephones. They caused damage to telephone plants in excess of $10 million. They made necessary the greatest mobilization of manpower and machines ever undertaken by any telephone organization.[2] The public relations men of the New England Telephone and Telegraph Company had the special mission to keep the public informed and thereby maintain confidence in the company.

When it was apparent that a major hurricane was on its way, the company public relations staff immediately made plans to handle the news side

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[1] Ibid., p. 14.

[2] Thomas M. Hennessey, "Hurricanes and Public Relations," Public Relations Journal, June, 1955, p. 7.

of the telephone damage that was bound to occur from the oncoming storm. Elaborate plans were quickly made with all the media by the three general information managers under the direction of the public relations vice president.

After the storm had passed, complete coverage was made available to the media. Up-to-the-minute TV shots were made available to stations during the restoration period, thereby keeping the public currently advised of the progress that was being made. The public relations men were quick to realize that the colorful and swift movement of men and materials epitomized to the public the all-out effort and determination to get telephone lines working as fast as possible. In communities throughout New England, local telephone managers were faced with the problem of getting the latest information to customers and employees. They telephoned information on progress of restoration direct to newspapers, radio stations and television studios. Where telephone facilities were unavailable, releases were delivered by special messenger.

In the words of the Company's Vice President:

> Experience with (hurricanes) Carol and Edna have shown clearly that the Telephone Company's public relations will not be seriously or permanently impaired if the public is kept well informed.[1]

Individual disaster to an isolated company presents yet another set of problems for the PR team. On Sunday, November 29, 1953 a sudden fire destroyed 80% of the C&D Battery Company of Conshohocken, Pennsylvania. All the sales records, standing orders, and correspondence were lost in the fire. The Company

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[1] Ibid., p. 8.

had no way of knowing what orders were on the books and what had been shipped. However, the Company officials decided to stay in business.

In addition to the obvious problem of replacing equipment and arranging to lease nearby facilities in which to set up production, the company had two broad public relations problems:

1. Prevent cancellation of orders by assuring customers that their orders would be filled promptly -- and thus discourage them from turning to other sources of supply.

2. Impress upon the employees that they would be back at work as fast as humanly possible -- and thus maintain a skilled labor force.[1]

To help solve these problems, management turned to its public relations counsel, who quickly evolved a recovery plan and put it into action. Among other things he sent letters to the field sales force explaining the situation as far as deliveries were concerned. The sales force in turn sent in duplicate copies of orders and notified the customers of the approximate delay in their order. At the same time letters were sent to the homes of all employees telling them what was being done and when they might expect to be called back to work.

Many other actions were taken by the PR counsel during the rehabilitation of the plant facilities, such as plant tours by newsmen, releases to trade magazines, special editions of the company magazine, etc. As a result, the resumption of production received almost as wide coverage as the original fire. A little more than a year after the fire, an open house was held in conjunction with

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[1]John T. Hall, "A Fire Made Them Famous...," Public Relations Journal, July, 1955, p. 8.

the opening of a new, improved plant. Moral -- the PR man's job had only begun when the disaster ended.

Groups such as trade associations have a specialized interest in some disasters. The Insurance Information Institute, for example, won the Public Relations Society of America's 1964 Silver Anvil Award with their Catastrophe Information Program. Entitled, "Public Relations in Time of Emergency", the catastrophe information program was implemented on 23 separate occasions in 1964. Those singled out for special attention were an earthquake in Alaska, hail and wind storms in the midwest and southwest, and a series of hurricanes that cut destructive swaths through Florida and several Gulf Coast states.

To the Insurance Information Institute, which serves as a public information and education agency for the property insurance companies, falls the responsibility for effectively disseminating insurance information in catastrophe-stricken areas. So that the insurance business can respond at a moment's notice, the Insurance Information Institute has mobilized various segments of the insurance business to execute the emergency information program. It has four basic objectives which are of particular interest to this portion of the study:

1. To help prevent injury and lessen property damage by advising property owners of steps to take both before and after disaster strikes.

2. To advise the public how to file claims for prompt settlement, and to spell out the steps that should be taken to avoid further damage pending completion of repairs.

3. To answer press queries about the extent of damage and the proportion that is covered by insurance; and, through the mass media, to inform the public about the steps being taken to expedite claims settlements.

4. To advise as to the types of damage that are not covered by insurance, so as to avoid the filing of thousands of unnecessary claims which might clog the claims handling machinery.[1]

In each of the three specific disaster situations listed above, the Institute's Information Plan was implemented immediately to satisfy the special needs of each. The Alaska earthquake, for example, posed the difficult problem of explaining to the public why so little insurance was in effect.

It can be seen that the same disaster may provide different problems for the many organizations affected and that different types of disaster may require a variety of responses from the same organization. The important lesson derived is that each organization must make elaborate disaster plans which include the public relations objectives for that particular organization in a variety of disaster situations. Many have already done so.

Brief Description of Some PR Disaster Plans

The American Red Cross

Perhaps no single organization in the United States has more constant contact with, or direct interest in disaster than the Red Cross. Since it is primarily supported by public donations, the Red Cross is vitally interested in telling the public about what it does in disasters. It is highly proficient in so doing.

The National Red Cross leadership feels that public information coverage of a disaster provides the public with accurate, useful and reassuring

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[1]Insurance Information Institute, Public Relations In Time Of Emergency, A report on results of the Catastrophe Information Program submitted as an entry in the Public Relations Society of America's 1964 Silver Anvil Award Competition, (unpublished), pp. 1-2.

information on Red Cross disaster relief operations. They also maintain that information widely disseminated contributes to better understanding and appreciation, not only of the Red Cross disaster relief program, but also of the entire Red Cross organization. And, very importantly, it has been found that proper media coverage is one of the most important factors in the rehabilitation of a disaster-stricken community.[1]

It is recognized that a large share of the responsibility for assuring good dissemination of information within and outside of the immediate disaster area rests with the public information staff assigned to the operation, ie., the information man on the scene. To assist the local information staffs do the best job possible the National Headquarters provides guidance in a number of ways.

The three basic objectives to be accomplished by any Red Cross public information staff in a disaster situation are:

To participate in the Red Cross disaster relief operation - Participation is carried out by informing disaster sufferers and the disaster-stricken community of Red Cross activities and how and by whom Red Cross aid may be obtained. Public Information staff should interpret Red Cross program and policy through the various news and other media and should support the disaster staff by providing specialized interpretive materials and keeping open the channels of communication with the community.

To tell the story of Red Cross disaster assistance outside the disaster area - Publicizing about disaster aid is accomplished by assisting the news and

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[1]The American National Red Cross, Disaster Manual For Public Information Staff, ARC 234C (March, 1962), p. 1.

other media in their efforts to cover the Red Cross disaster story and by providing information on activities to the Red Cross area and national headquarters public information offices for dissemination through national media and for distribution to Red Cross chapters in other parts of the country.

To provide support to over-all (year-round) Red Cross public information and other educational programs - Support is given by proving human interest stories, photographs, slides, film footage, tape recordings, etc., and by preparing a final printed report, if warranted, that can be used for educational purposes.[1]

A number of aids to assist local information staffs and relief directors in accomplishing these three objectives are prepared and disseminated by the national headquarters.

There is a public relations section in the Red Cross' official Disaster Relief Handbook (ARC-234), which spells out basic policies and general steps to be taken, information-wise, in the event of Red Cross participation in a disaster.

In addition there are two excellent handbooks which supplement the general information available in the Disaster Relief Handbook. One of these is designed and written to help directors of disaster operations to fulfill the public information and public relations aspects of their operations in localities where little or no professional assistance is available. It provides suggestions for the usual informational activities involved in a disaster operation. Some pattern materials such as sample stories, announcements, and letters for use in these

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[1] Ibid.

activities are included. It is rather like a "What to do until the Doctor Arrives" manual suitable for small or predictable types of disaster. However, in major disasters where there are no professional information staff personnel on the scene, a full time information specialist is dispatched to take charge. Very often this specialist is Mr. Roy Popkin, the Assistant for Public Information to the National Director of Disaster Services.[1]

The non-professional manual, while presenting specialized suggestions concerning the release of news photos, and how to deal with rumors, etc., is careful to impress upon its users the importance of building public understanding. It states that in all contacts with public officials, community groups, media representatives, and local Red Cross Chapter people, the following points should be stressed:

> All Red Cross assistance is given on the basis of disaster-caused needs and as an outright gift. This assistance is made possible through the generous response of the public, which has entrusted the Red Cross to act as its disaster relief agent.
>
> People innately desire to help themselves. After providing emergency services, the Red Cross works with families on an individual basis to supplement this self-help with assistance that goes beyond the resources of the family.
>
> Where disaster needs cannot be adequately met through local resources, the national organization provides the necessary additional resources, including experienced personnel and funds.
>
> The Red Cross seeks at all levels the cooperation of governmental and civilian groups, to which full credit should be given for their

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[1]Interview with Roy S. Popkin, Assistant to the National Director, Disaster Services of the National American Red Cross, in Washington, D. C., May 27, 1965.

> participation in and support of Red Cross disaster relief efforts. However, when military equipment has been provided at Red Cross request and expense, make it clear that the Red Cross is paying the costs involved.[1]

There is a second guide book called the Disaster Public Information Manual, designed and written for public information staff personnel, ie., a manual for the fulltime information employees. While similar in design to the non-professional guidebook, this manual is a more detailed presentation of policy and objectives. For example, it is more explicit concerning specific responsibilities for coverage during the initial stages of the disaster. It also spells out the official relationship of the Information Officer with the local Director of Operations.

Periodic reports of Red Cross participation in disasters are also disseminated to the field offices. These facilitate the exchange of information and experiences which help information staffs to further anticipate and prepare for public information activities in disaster situations.

A catalog of "Aids for Disaster Program Interpretation" is also made available to all field offices. It contains an illustrated inventory of materials available to assist the information staffs. Materials available from regional offices are items such as these:

- Identification posters.

- Directional and location signs.

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[1]The American National Red Cross, Disaster Area Director's Guide to Public Information - Public Relations, ARC-1596, (Rev. April, 1964), p. 1.

- Specialized disaster manuals.

- Films on various types of disaster.

- Slide presentations on disaster procedures.[1]

The Red Cross is not only fully prepared to assist the helpless and suffering in disaster; it is ready in all respects to tell the public about what it is doing and is prepared to do.

Civil Defense

In the United States we strive to deter a deliberate attack by maintaining a clear and convincing capability to inflict unacceptable damage on an attacker, even if that attacker were to strike first. The Defense Department terms this capability, "assured destruction."[2] In the event a nuclear attack should nevertheless occur, Civil Defense is designed to limit the damage to our population and industrial capacity. The Defense Department terms this capability, "damage limitation."[3]

The basic goal of Civil Defense, most simply stated, is the survival of the American population in the event of nuclear attack on the United States. This is not to say that even in combination with other elements of strategic defense, widespread death and destruction in the wake of an all-out nuclear attack could be prevented. One recent Civil Defense Publication states it in this way:

> Millions of Americans would die, and there is no point in looking away from this harsh reality of nuclear war. But

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[1]The American National Red Cross, Aids For Disaster.

[2]Office of Civil Defense, Civil Defense 1965, MP-30, April, 1965, p. 2.

[3]Ibid.

> with proper preparations, which are well within the boundaries of technical and economic feasibility, millions of other Americans would live to sustain the life of the nation.[1]

Civil Defense has a large and continuing public information program designed to educate the public about its objectives and to enlist their support. However, for the purposes of this study we are interested in the philosophy and plans for information and public relations in a disaster situation, ie., following a nuclear attack.

In the chapter, "Preparing for Emergency Operations," of the 1965 Civil Defense Manual, there is a section on Communications with the Public.[2] The Office of Civil Defense is vitally concerned with assuring the physical capability of communicating with the public in the event of attack.

The section on communications states that "Getting official information and guidance to the public in time of national emergency could be directly responsible for saving millions of lives."[3] An Emergency Broadcast System (EBS) has been established to provide the President, the Federal Government, and State and local governments with a means of communicating with the public through non-government broadcast stations in the period preceding, during, and following enemy attack.

Determining the type of information that would go out over EBS and other information media in time of national emergency and the manner in which it would be disseminated is a vital part of the Office of Civil Defense public information

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[1] Ibid., p. 3.

[2] Ibid., p. 24.

[3] Ibid.

planning mission. At the same time, any system for emergency public information cannot act to increase the crisis level or hamper the President in his efforts to resolve the emergency. Developing the mechanism to meet this dual responsibility -- the need to instruct the people without obstructing officials negotiations in an emergency -- is a fundamental part of the Civil Defense public information program.[1]

While the plans of the Office of Civil Defense for public information in a nuclear disaster have happily, been untested in a war situation, they are in a practical state of readiness. There are information plans for a disaster the world hopes will never take place.

Office of Emergency Planning

International conflict takes many forms and requires many responses. The Office of Emergency Planning in the Executive Offices of the President has the responsibility to prepare the National Plan for Emergency Preparedness which promulgates plans to meet international conflict. These the plan considers under three broad contingencies: international tension, limited war, and general war.

A common understanding of the factors involved and a clear statement of the responsibilities of Federal, State, and local agencies are necessary for the kind of planning which can most effectively channel the energies of this country where they are needed. The National Plan sets forth the basic principles, responsibilities, preparations, and responses of civil government necessary to

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[1] Ibid., p. 25.

meet any kind of national defense emergency. It describes the roles of Federal Government, the States and their political subdivisions and as appropriate, non-governmental organizations and individual citizens. The Plan is neither an operational manual nor a technical guide. Technical plans and operational guidance are developed and issued by the appropriate Federal agencies in accordance with their presidentially assigned responsibilities.[1]

In the chapter on Government Operation, there is an important section which discusses Emergency Information. This section briefly mentions the Emergency Broadcast System and the responsibilities assigned to the Office of Civil Defense in the event of general war. Of particular interest to this study, however, are the public information objectives of the U. S. Government in an emergency situation:

> Objectives. The public must be well informed in order to retain the will to survive and recover as a nation, to take effective emergency measures, and to contribute maximum support to the emergency activities of government. This requires not only suitable means of communicating with the public under emergency conditions but also reliable and authoritative information.[2]

To achieve these stated objectives, the following preparatory actions are listed in the Plan as appropriate for implementation:

> Organization and training of emergency staffs at all levels of government, to be supplemented in time of crisis by volunteer personnel from appropriate public information media.

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[1]Office of Emergency Planning, The National Plan For Emergency Preparedness, Document No. 20402 (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1964), p. 122.

[2]Ibid.

Establishment of priorities for the release of information.

Development of procedures for preparing program material in cooperation with the radio-television industry and the press.

Development of plans to advise all information media on protective measures, such as shelter, dispersal, and procurement of emergency supplies and power needed for maintaining operations.

Development of plans to assure that all information for general distribution conforms to national security requirements.

Development of plans to assist all public information media in restoring disrupted services and to assure that emergency information would be made available as quickly as possible.[1]

It should be noted that the National Plan for Emergency Preparedness recognizes the necessity of a clearly defined information policy in the event of any national emergency or stress situation. Other Federal Agencies are charged with the responsibility of making preparations to insure that the information objectives of the Office of Emergency Planning are effectively carried out.

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

At the writing of this paper, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has no formal disaster information plan. There is, however, one being prepared. The plan will generally confirm procedures which the Agency "has grown into in the last several years."[2]

NASA Headquarters in Washington kindly provided the author with a rough draft copy of the instruction currently in final preparation. While the

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Letter from Walter A. Pennino, Deputy Director, Public Information Office, Atomic Energy Commission, Washington, D. C., June 15, 1965.

information contained therein is not as yet clearly established policy, ie., approved for official dissemination, it does contain the basic ingredients for the final plan. Therefore, only basic concepts will be considered here. Such an examination is totally sufficient in the context of this study in any event.

The Instruction, which will appear as a section in NASA's General Management Instructions, establishes the policies and procedures for the release of information involving accidents which result in the death or serious injury to any person(s), or destruction or extensive damage to government-owned property. The policies will be applicable to NASA Headquarters, all NASA Centers and installations, and the Jet Propulsion Laboratory.

An interesting specification, and valuable lesson to this study, is the one which assigns responsibility to the center director to immediately notify the press and NASA Headquarters of all accidents on his installation which result in death or serious injury, or destruction of or extensive damage to property. The P.I.O. prepares and disseminates the information, but the responsibility rests with the director. This helps to insure cooperation and interest throughout the organization.

The instruction also makes a number of other specified procedures by local installations mandatory in such situations:

> Notify, by telephone, the News Room at NASA Headquarters during working hours and the NASA staff duty officer in non-duty hours (He is further charged with notifying the Public Information Officer in Washington.).
>
> While the earliest practical release of information concerning serious accidents is encouraged, releasing authorities are

> admonished to release only established facts, and not to speculate as to the cause of the accident, extent of damage, affect on the NASA program involved, etc.
>
> The subject of releasing names of casualties in every possible situation is covered extensively. The subject of notification of next-of-kin, accidents in the public domain, etc. are all considered.
>
> Casualties at a NASA installation might include military personnel, contractor representatives, NASA employees, and visiting observors. Each of these contingencies is covered in the plan.
>
> Location of the accident is of special interest to this instruction also, and the release procedures to be taken in each type of location (NASA facilities, military bases, contractor facilities, etc.) is covered in some detail.[1]

NASA's realistic preparation for possible catastrophe is another excellent example of planning ahead.

Atomic Energy Commission

Another Government Agency with specialized problems in an accident, emergency or disaster situation is the Atomic Energy Commission. The primary concern of that Agency is for radiation accidents and incidents. Like NASA, the AEC has rather elaborate directions for handling all aspects of a nuclear accident, particularly those which may involve radiation.

There are a number of manuals and handbooks available for the press and public alike concerning accidents. There are more detailed ones which assist the information staff in intelligently answering questions. Some of these are:

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[1] Abstracted by the author from the NASA General Management Instruction (in preparation) concerning the "Release of Information, Accidents and Casualties."

- Operational Accidents and Radiation Exposure Experience.[1]

- Radiological Emergency Procedures for the Non-Specialist.

- Reporting and Investigating Accidents and Radiation Exposures (Handbook).

- Technical Information Bulletin on Atomic Weapon Accident Hazards, Precautions and Procedures.

- Joint Statement by Department of Defense and Atomic Energy Commission Concerning Nuclear Accidents (Department of Defense News Release 124-58).

Rather than dissect these documents, it is of greater profit to examine the AEC's philosophy on the release of information concerning accidents. This information has been obtained from public statements, internal AEC Memorandums, and correspondence with the Division of Public Information, AEC.

Mr. Duncan Clark, Director of the Division of Information, AEC, in remarks before the Seventh Annual Naval Reserve Nuclear Science Seminar discussed public information in radiation accidents. While the speech was made some six years ago, the author has received assurance that the remarks contained therein still constitute guidlines currently in effect.[2] In his opening remarks Mr. Clark said:

> The function of a Government information man is to provide useful facts to the public news media as quickly, as completely and as accurately as possible, and not to attempt to control opinions about those facts. The temptation to avoid criticism or embarrassment

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[1]This particularly candid document is a statistical digest of accident information for the period 1943-64. The data pertains to both the Manhattan Engineer District as well as to the AEC. Publication No. 20402 (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1965).

[2]Pennino, loc. cit.

> by telling only part of the story, or by sugar-coating it, can be strong. This temptation, however, should be firmly resisted in connection with any work that is financed by the money from the general tax-payer. The embarrassment involved in admitting an error candidly is small compared to that which results if you are caught trying to hide or minimize it, and your attempted evasion is held up before the public. A radiation accident, for example, is an unpleasant fact of life which must be faced up to. There is no public relations magic that can make it fade away, or reduce the legitimate interest of the news media in telling the public about it. The most important idea that I hope to leave with you is that the best way to handle the informational aspects of such an accident is simply to tell the truth about it.[1]

The philosophy of the AEC may be further recognized in the following general policy guidelines concerning public information and nuclear accidents:

> Work to educate the public concerning radiation on a continuing basis. An important aspect of this educational effort is the informing of local news media and of local authorities.
>
> A disaster plan should be worked out in advance.
>
> Get the information out as quickly as possible and completely as possible concerning any accident.
>
> Work with the reporters, not against them.
>
> Be sure of the facts before they are issued.
>
> Remember that the really fast media are the radio and television -- it is vital to get the information to these media to prevent undue public alarm.
>
> Make sure the information issued publicly is consistent.

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[1]Duncan C. Clark, Public Information in Radiation Accidents, remarks delivered before the Seventh Annual Naval Reserve Nuclear Science Seminar, Brookhaven National Laboratory, Upton, I. I., New York, Sept. 18, 1959.

> If the accident is away from the normal issuance point for news, keep communications open between the accident site and the home installation.
>
> Remember that any action taken during an emergency may be reported publicly and have considerable influence in the news treatment of the accident.
>
> Whenever possible, it is best to rely on the judgement of experienced public information officers.[1]

One practical result of the AEC's public information philosophy is an information kit jointly prepared by the AEC, Department of Defense, and Armed Services. Commonly referred to as the "Broken Arrow Kit" it treats in detail the public information actions to be taken in the event of a nuclear accident. It is of particular interest to the military P.I.O. It contains a number of helpful documents and samples to quickly assist the P.I.O. in the event of an accident.

- The Basic Nuclear Accident Information Plan for the Department of Defense.
- Instructions concerning the release of information when more than one service is involved in accidents or incidents.
- Nuclear Weapons Safety Guide.
- Background material -- Basic Facts on Radiation and Radioactive Fallout.
- The Technical Information Bulletin on Atomic Weapon Accident Hazards, Precautions and Procedure.
- Sample grid map for air crashes.
- Seven sample releases covering most contingencies in a nuclear accident.[2]

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[1]The Broken Arrow Kit is held on an unclassified basis by a number of U. S. military commands.

[2]Ibid.

The philosophy and activities of the AEC serve to illustrate what can be done to adequately prepare for a possible disaster situation. The AEC has done an intelligent job of preparation. Their activities in this area are worthy of special note and emulation.

The Department of Defense and the Armed Services

The Department of Defense (DOD) formulates all basic policy regarding the release of information by the armed services. The armed services, in turn disseminate their own policy instructions based on basic DOD directives. There is no master disaster plan issued by the Department of Defense, or by any of the armed services. Since the military services, individually and collectively, are subject to all the many types of natural and man-made disaster, the lack of a master plan is understandable. The AEC and NASA, for instance, operate in limited areas of specialized activities with predictable accident situations. Individual military commands can by the same token anticipate certain disasters peculiar to their specialized operations.

DOD and the services do provide basic guidance to component commands concerning the general policy concerning release of accident or disaster information. DOD has issued three basic Directives on which individual service guidance is based in the area of disaster information:

> DOD Directive 5200.6: Policy Governing the Custody, Use and Preservation of Department of Defense Official Information Which requires Protection in the Public Interest.
>
> DOD Directive 5230.13: Principles of Public Information Policy.
>
> DOD Directive 5410.1: Release of Information Concerning Military Personnel involved in Accidents.

Each service, in turn has prepared a basic set of Information Policy Directives best suited to their individual needs. The Army policies are contained in Army Regulations;[1] Navy policies are in the U. S. Navy Public Information Manual;[2] and Air Force policies are in a manual entitled, Information Policies and Procedures.[3]

Individual commands, bases, installations, fleets, etc. reissue policy guidance best suited to their individual needs and circumstances based on these basic service guides.

Disaster plans such as those discussed earlier in this chapter are, therefore, the optional responsibility of local commands. While it was not possible to poll all military commands concerning the existence of such individual plans, research by the author through questionnaire and interview, indicate that very few individual Naval commands have prepared such a plan.

The Office of Information, Secretary of the Air Force (SAFOI) in Washington, D. C. has designed an accident folder to assist its Information Duty Officers. Called a "Colonels Kit", it is prepared in a heavy briefcase-like folder and distributed in duplicate to each Colonel who reports for SAFOI duty. One copy is kept in the Colonel's Pentagon desk, the other at home. This kit contains the following helpful materials:

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[1]Department of the Army, Army Regulations No. 360-5; Public Information, General Policies, TAGO 932A, August, 1961.

[2]Department of the Navy, U. S. Navy Public Information Manual, Navexos P-1035 (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1953).

[3]Department of the Air Force, Information Policies and Procedures, AFM 190-4, November 20, 1964.

An interoffice memorandum spelling out latest Air Force policies for the implementation of information activities during Air Force assistance in U. S. civil emergency or disaster.

A regulation outlining Air Force responsibilities in matters pertaining to civil defense and other domestic emergencies.

Organization and mission of the Continental Air Command.

Worldwide directory of Air Force Information Officers.

The Air Force regulation concerning information coverage of Air Force disaster relief and other humanitarian missions.

Regulation concerning information pictorial activities.

Regulation concerning the use of military carriers for public affairs purposes.

Regulation concerning release of information on accidents.

Regulation concerning off-base aircraft, missile, ground, water, and explosive accidents; emergency assistance, and community relations.

A list of Army Information Officers at major U. S. commands.

Map showing major, active, Air Force Installations in the Continental U. S.

This excellent kit permits a single duty officer to handle the initial informational phases of an accident or disaster situation in an intelligent manner. It also permits him to initiate a number of actions to insure the best possible cooperation with the media. It is an excellent example of planning ahead.

Conclusion

In this chapter the author has presented counsel and advice concerning informational activities in a disaster voiced by a number of experienced experts; the specific actions taken by a number of organizations; and the current disaster plans

and informational philosophies of organizations accutely aware of the possibility of serious accident or mishap.

From the evidence thus presented it becomes obvious that the actions taken before disaster occurs are often the most important. When disaster strikes, the organizations which have planned to meet the informational requirements are the ones which most effectively survive public scrutiny. Perhaps the two most important words to remember in a disaster situation are -- Planning and Candor.

CHAPTER III

LESSONS FROM PAST NAVAL DISASTERS

It is helpful and comforting to discuss successes in the handling of public relations in past naval disasters. However, it is probably more important to scrutinize the reasons for failure. This study does both.

The following are the research components of this portion of the study:

Examination of Navy files.

Examination of Navy disaster case studies.

Interviews with military P.I.O.'s, newsmen, civilian public relations men, and government information specialists.

An open-end questionnaire (Appendix C) was sent to 63 retired and active duty Navy P.I.O.'s with an average of over 13 years active duty experience.

Due to the number of naval disasters studied by the author, cited in interviews, and referenced by questionnaires it is not possible to treat each one individually. A detailed discussion of one or more selected case studies would not be useful since many exemplify certain good or bad practices, but not all. In any event, a number of detailed case studies are available from other sources and are listed in the bibliography.

The gauge of success or failure is difficult to measure. In the Navy success means competence in carrying out the assigned mission; performing according to ones rank and responsibility; reflecting one's own personal experience; and upholding and maintaining the traditions of the naval service.

Research (mentioned above) has shown that there are a number of factors common to all disasters which influence the success or failure of disaster public relations. Each of these factors is discussed individually. All are applicable to public relations in any naval disaster.

Factors Influencing Public Relations In Naval Disaster

Public Relations Disaster Plan

One factor stongly influencing the success or failure of public relations problems in a naval disaster is the existence of a written disaster plan. Each person polled or interviewed readily admitted the advisability of such a plan.

One Navy P.I.O. with 21 years experience was personally familiar with two similar disasters which occurred within eight months of one another and was able to make meaningful comments in regard to the worth of disaster plans. His comments concerned the explosions on board two aircraft carriers.

On October 16, 1953 the USS LEYTE suffered an explosion in her port catapult machinery room. At the time she was docked in the Boston Naval Shipyard. Thirty-seven military personnel and civilian workers were killed and twenty-eight injured.[1] In the initial hours of the disaster there was a great deal of confusion regarding public information activities concerned with the disaster. There were a number of unfortunate incidents involving the media with crewmembers, workmen, and armed sentries. Marines physically removed newsmen from the

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[1] Boston Daily Globe, October 17, 1953, p. 1.

ship, cameras belonging to civilian photographers were impounded, and some newsmen were threatened with loaded weapons. Wives, fiances and others close to LEYTE men were refused entry to the base, and were given neither information nor a place to wait.[1] Within a few hours many of the problems were taken care of, but not before much irreparable harm had been done.

On May 26, 1954 the USS BENNINGTON was steaming 75 miles south of Newport, R. I. when she was shaken by a series of violent explosions. Metal ladders and hatches on the port side in the vicinity of the forward elevator were twisted and torn to shreds. There were 103 men killed and over 100 injured.[2]

The public relations actions taken in the BENNINGTON disaster were considered outstanding by the Navy Department. Proof of this is the fact that a case study outlining the public relations aspects of the BENNINGTON disaster has been disseminated throughout the Navy as guidance for public relations handling of Naval disasters.[3]

Lessons learned from the LEYTE disaster were obviously applied to similar problems encountered after the BENNINGTON explosions. However, they were not merely committed to memory; they were preserved in a written disaster plan. In the words of the P.I.O. referred to above:

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[1]U. S. Bureau of Naval Personnel, Navy Training Course: Journalist First Class and Chief, NAVPERS 10295 (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1961), p. 182.

[2]Boston Evening Globe, May 26, 1954, p. 1.

[3]U. S. Navy, Office of Information, Case Study of Public Relations Aspects of USS BENNINGTON Disaster, CHINFO NOTICE 5720 -- Guidance for public relations handling of Naval Disasters (Washington: U. S. Navy, Office of Information, 1954).

> As a result of experiences from the USS LEYTE disaster just months previously, COMONE's (First Naval District's) P.I.O. and staff had an accident/disaster plan which they put into effect. Media were cleared and admitted to the ship immediately upon arrival. An aura of complete cooperation between the Navy and commercial news media was verified by surveys taken later.[1]

Preparedness

Contemplating a major disaster is not a pleasant task. The Navy's operational forces have learned that constant training to meet a national emergency, peace-keeping action, or disaster situation have paid handsome dividends when the real thing happens. The P.I.O. must not turn his back on disaster. A Disaster Plan could be meaningless if the information staff is unfamiliar with it or cannot put it into operation. One senior Navy P.I.O. who has served in a number of top information jobs had this to say:

> I can't help but conclude that this (disaster PR) like almost everything else in the public-information business, depends so very much on preparedness, the same type of preparedness that a ship's crew must have if it is to meet its commitments. All too many people in the Navy, and this is true from the most senior right on down the scale, seem to be of the belief that P.I.O. functions are crisis functions, and that our load has but peaks and valleys.[2]

The P.I.O. should train his staff to handle disaster. All concerned should have a thorough knowledge of the Disaster Plan and be able to put it into effect. Each individual should know his duties and responsibilities, ie., where he goes,

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[1]Letter from Commander R. B. Phillips, USN, Public Information Officer, FIFTH Naval District, Norfolk, Va., June 24, 1965.

[2]Letter from Captain V. C. Thomas, Jr., USN, Public Information Officer, U. S. European Command, Paris, France, June 29, 1965.

what he does, what he may be expected to do and his own particular part in the overall information operation. It would be useful for the P.I.O. to run drills in the off-duty hours to determine how long it would take to fully man his office in a disaster situation. He should periodically put the Disaster Plan in full operation to find out how long it might take to get out a release or radio tape. He should also contact the telephone company, Western Union, the Transportation Officer, etc. to establish the proper procedures for rapidly obtaining the additional facilities he will need in a disaster.

The P.I.O. who considers a major disaster inevitable and prepares for it accordingly, will be able to act effectively if it does occur.

Command Responsibility

The Secretary of the Navy has assigned the public relations responsibility in the Navy to Commanding Officers. In this regard he has said:

> Commanding officers of all ships and stations are responsible for the implementation of the public information policies and programs of the Navy Department and for the conduct of public information within their commands. Their responsibility for public information is identical with their responsibility in other affairs.[1]

He has further said that:

> The public information officer is responsible directly to the commanding officer...[2]

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[1]U. S. Navy, Chief of Information, U. S. Navy Public Information Manual, NAVEXOS P11035 (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1955), p. 8.

[2]Ibid.

This responsibility of the commanding officer is no less binding in a disaster situation. There is probably no time when the responsibility of the public information officer is more keenly felt. It is also a time when the public information officer needs the backing and confidence of the commanding officer.

In a disaster the public information officer needs the assistance of a great many people on the naval staff. The interest and concern of the commanding officer will influence the other personnel under his command. They are inclined to do what they think the commanding officer wants done. If the staff knows the commanding officer is vitally concerned with the public information aspects of a naval disaster, they are concerned too. If the commanding officer does not evidence such concern his staff members may be less than completely cooperative.

Utilizing the P.I.O.

When a naval disaster occurs, one of the most important officers advising the commanding officer should be the P.I.O. The concentrated media interest will probably never again be as intense as it is during a disaster. It is a time when a professional information officer proves his worth to his command and to the Navy.

The media have specialized requirements either unknown or misunderstood by most people. All the media are concerned about deadlines. Wire Services need a quick report in order to get a few lines "on the wire". Still photographers and newsreel cameramen need vantage points from which to cover the action. The television stations may wish to set up sound cameras for interviews. After the initial shock has subsided, the news magazines will want "in-depth" materials. The list of such specialized needs is endless.

To someone other than the P.I.O. these special requirements may appear to be nuisance requests. The P.I.O. understands that these are normal requests and acts to see that they are properly taken care of.

It is important, therefore, that the special talents of the P.I.O. be recognized and utilized in a disaster. He must be considered a technician with an important and specialized function to perform.

The Captain of the BENNINGTON in the 1953 disaster was quick to recognize the importance of the P.I.O. and to follow his recommendations.[1] He is a retired Vice Admiral currently serving as the head of the Central Intelligence Agency.[2]

P.I.O. Responsibility

It has been noted that the news media have specialized requirements which must be interpreted by the P.I.O. In this regard it is important to emphasize the necessity of the P.I.O. to recognize and assume his full share of the responsibility in a disaster situation. The news media, the public and the next-of-kin are relying on the Navy for complete, accurate, and timely information. In providing these services there are a number of actions and decisions which must be made quickly and capably.

Referring routine decisions to the commanding officer, for instance, can be time consuming. It is also exasperating to the newsman and to the commanding

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[1] U. S. Navy, Bureau of Naval Personnel, op. cit., p. 192.

[2] The officer referred to is Vice Admiral William F. Raborn, Jr., USN retired. Also see New York Times, April 18, 1965, section IV, p. 5 and on April 29, 1965, p. 16.

officer. Such a procedure may force the press to seek information on their own. It may also force the commanding officer to take over the public information aspects resulting in poor public relations practices due to a lack of knowledge and experience.

Disaster is a time when the P.I.O. may have to "stick his neck out"[1] to get the job done. The P.I.O. under these circumstances is acting in the same capacity as the commanding officer of a ship in battle. There are certain rules and regulations which must be known and complied with. However, in the abnormal situation of disaster there are actions which must be taken based on the P.I.O.'s experience and competency. It is a time when the P.I.O. must assume the important responsibility for preserving the good name and reputation of the United States Navy.

Organizing Work Load

The P.I.O. who is firmly committed and devoted to a policy of full and complete cooperation with the press may cause his own failure by trying to do too much. A major disaster stimulates an almost endless demand for information. All the media attempt to get personalized accounts and direct quotes from the Navy spokesman. Each radio station, for example, will attempt to procure a taped statement or interview tailored to its individual requirements. This was noted by one researcher in his study of the USS THRESHER disaster:

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[1]Letter from Captain J. B. Smith, USN, Public Information Officer, Commander in Chief, Allied Forces, Southern Europe, Naples, Italy, June 16, 1965.

> When THRESHER was lost, literally hundreds of small radio stations called the Pentagon seeking to record interviews with Navy spokesmen. A public information official in Washington noted that their compliance with these requests delayed their final decision on plans to transport newsmen to the site of search operations.[1]

By becoming preoccupied with certain details, the P.I.O. may neglect more important issues. In a disaster situation the P.I.O., must organize his time and facilities. Urgent tasks of importance should of course be handled by the P.I.O. in an effort to do the best job possible. However, details with a lower priority should be delegated to assistants if possible. If the P.I.O. is without help, those less important activities must simply wait their turn in the line of established priority. The P.I.O. must never fall into the trap of performing each task in chronological order.

Physical Arrangements

It must be remembered in a disaster situation with a large influx of media representatives and next-of-kin, that these people are visitors in a strange environment. They must depend on others for their comfort, transportation, bodily needs, a place to wait or a place to work. Special attention to these various physical needs is an important aspect of the P.I.O.'s job.

Newsmen will need typewriters, paper, pencils, access to a telephone, etc. The next-of-kin will need a place to wait, something to occupy the long minutes or hours, and perhaps a hot cup of coffee to refresh them. Large signs,

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[1]Joseph W. Stierman, Jr., LCDR, USN, "Public Relations Aspect of a Major Disaster: A Case Study of the Loss of USS THRESHER" (unpublished M.S. thesis, School of Public Communication, Boston University, 1964), p. 154.

even hastily prepared, pointing the way to rest rooms or phone booths can make a great deal of difference in the atmosphere of a press room or dependents lounge. They also save the P.I.O. and his staff precious minutes in answering basic questions when time is at a premium.

The people who converge on the P.I.O. in a time of disaster are for the most part, vitally interested and concerned individuals. They should be treated with understanding and with special concern for their physical needs.

Specified Releasing Authority

Under any circumstances it is highly desirable to have a designated authority or specified coordinator for the release of information. In the midst of a disaster it is mandatory if satisfactory relations are to be maintained with the media and the public.

When no one person is recognized as the official spokesman, there is confusion among the press, the relief workers, officials in charge, and indeed among the public information staff as well.

The newsman without an official, authoritative point of contact has no ready way to distinguish truth from rumor or speculation. In addition, those people involved in the disaster and the personnel taking part in the relief efforts don't know who is receiving and coordinating disaster information for subsequent dissemination. The result is that current and meaningful information which should be continually passed to the press may never be released at all.

The individuals in charge of the relief efforts don't have the time or training to cope with the specialized requirements of the media. When contacted

by media representatives, they may become uncooperative or even abusive. This can only make a bad situation that much worse.

One Navy P.I.O. queried, a Captain with 19 years information experience, had vivid memories concerning the crash of a navy airplane. He had this to say in regard to a specified releasing authority:

> There was a plane crash in a civilian housing area near the Johnsville Naval Air Station (Philadelphia, Pa.) in the early 1960's. Several civilians were killed in their homes. With the Navy rescue and salvage personnel on the scene were members of the civilian fire department and local police. No one had the authority to release information, assist photographers, etc.
>
> With no such authority established the Naval Officer-in-Charge of the relief efforts prohibited photographers from taking pictures, expelled newsmen from the scene, and ordered no one to answer questions, etc...thus making the worst possible out of a bad situation.[1]

Safeguarding Classified Information

Every Navyman has the personal responsibility for protecting classified matter against loss, compromise or unauthorized disclosure. In the event of a disaster the P.I.O. must be particularly alert to this fact.

A compromise of classified information has been defined as:

> ...a loss of security that results from an unauthorized person obtaining knowledge of classified information.[2]

The unauthorized person need not be an enemy agent or a spy. The person may not even know that he has obtained classified information. To cause a compromise, however, it is only necessary for a person who has not been

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[1]Letter from Captain J. E. Jenkins, USN, Public Information Officer, ELEVENTH Naval District, San Diego, Calif., June 28, 1965.

[2]U. S. Navy, Bureau of Naval Personnel, op. cit., p. 49.

officially cleared for the information to have access to it. An unauthorized disclosure can also be the release of classified matter (information, photograph, etc.) through carelessness, error or wrongdoing. [1]

Compromise or unauthorized disclosure can easily occur in the temporary confusion and uncoordinated activity which usually follows a disaster. Very often medical workers, policemen, civilian workmen, disaster workers or newsmen find themselves in areas which are normally restricted to them.

While the P.I.O. isn't expected to act as the security officer at the scene of the disaster, he is responsible for the protection of classified matter which falls under his cognizance in performing his public information duties. To guard against disclosure and the embarrassing tasks of confiscating film and "censoring" news copy, the P.I.O. should provide the necessary safeguards such as knowledgable escorts and a set of ground rules for press activities at the scene of the disaster. Most importantly, he should confer at the earliestpossible moment with the cognizant security officer to ascertain the necessary background information relative to the safeguarding of classified information.

Cooperation With The Press

Mere cooperation with newsmen will not guarantee sympathetic handling of the facts in an unfortunate situation. The public has a right to know exactly what happened. Newsmen have a job to do and will do it whether the Navy cooperates or not.

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[1] Ibid.

Cooperation, however, will often result in a more accurate and undistorted picture of the situation. If all the facts are presented as they become available, carefully and candidly, newsmen are more likely to report them objectively. There is also less margin for error and less chance for misinterpretation.

If the Navy refuses to cooperate the newsmen have no alternative but to start looking elsewhere for information. In an accident or disaster situation the newsman won't hesitate to interview any bystander in an effort to get information.

If the newsman knows that the P.I.O. is doing all in his power to cooperate and obtain up-to-the-minute information he will prefer to wait for authenticated facts. He will prefer to hear the facts presented by an official spokesman or the Commanding Officer. Cooperation works both ways.

Prompt and Continuous Release of Information

One of the information missions of the Navy is "to inform the public of the activities of the Navy as compatible with military security."[1] Navy policy dictates that all unclassified information in the public interest be released. In a disaster situation the prompt and continuous release of information is particularly important. The public has a special interest in learning the facts.

It must be remembered that newsmen are the representatives of the public at the scene of a disaster. Through their eyes the public learns what has happened, how it happened, and the other details that are available. The public's first

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[1]U. S. Navy, Chief of Information, op. cit., p. 3.

impression of the situation and the Navy will be made by what they see in print, hear on the radio, or watch on television. It is important that these impressions be unbiased and undistorted from the beginning. As noted earlier, it is the earliest stories that make the biggest headlines, and the first impressions that are likely to be the most lasting.

After the first stories are released it is important to retain the trust and confidence of the press covering the disaster. One way to keep the press objective is to keep the facts coming. In a major disaster the press is expected to keep supplementary reports coming until the emergency has subsided. If the media representatives don't receive information as it becomes available they will seek it out on their own. In so doing they may not get the true story.

The first hours of a disaster are hectic and tiring. The P.I.O. cannot afford to take a break in the critical hours following the release of the initial release. He must be gathering more information to answer the inevitable questions which will follow. The direct responsibility of the P.I.O. and his staff continues until the interest of the press and public has been satisfied.

Releasing the Names of Casualties

The Navy knows that one of the greatest shocks a family can receive is to hear on a newscast that a son or husband has been killed, without first having received official notification. Whenever possible, the Navy protects the welfare of Navy families by withholding the names of casualties until official notification is made.

Once the next-of-kin have been notified, however, the Navy attempts to expedite the release of the names to the news media. This also serves to relieve the anxiety of the families of Navymen who were not involved.

On naval installations, for instance, the names are withheld until it is reasonably certain that the next-of-kin have been notified.[1] There are separate rules, contained in current instructions, which are applied to the release of casualty names under various circumstances. The rules governing notification are too numerous to list here.

The press is vitally interested in obtaining the names of the dead and injured. It may be necessary to release partial lists to satisfy local media. Local next-of-kin may be notified within hours. It may take 18 or 20 hours to receive notification receipts from families all over the country. The P.I.O. may wish to release names as the receipts of notification are received from next-of-kin. This is difficult but it does serve to keep the press up-to-date. In any case it is vital that the names be double-checked to insure accuracy. Releasing the wrong name is worse than releasing no name at all.

Getting the names out may require special initiative. On April 26, 1952 when the carrier HORNET collided with and sank the destroyer HOBSON, 176 men were lost.[2] News of the disaster was flashed across the country. Next-of-kin of those on board the HOBSON waited for some word of loved ones. It happened

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[1]U. S. Navy, Bureau of Naval Personnel, Bureau of Naval Personnel Manual (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1959), p. 390.

[2]David M. Cooney, LCDR, USN, A Chronology of the U. S. Navy: 1775-1965 (New York: Franklin Watts Inc., 1965), p. 897.

on a Sunday, which complicated the notification of next-of-kin and the release of information.

The information duty officers in Washington were given permission to work in the casualty section of the Bureau of Naval Personnel in order to prepare a casualty list rapidly. The P.I.O. argued that in this case it was humane to get the names to the press as soon as possible to alleviate the fears and worries of the families of survivors. He maintained that since most families knew of the disaster and its seriousness from news reports, they would be prepared for the worst.[1] In this unique instance, wire service representatives were permitted to work alongside Navy P.I.O.'s to expedite the release of names. While certainly unusual, this case demonstrates what can be done.

Providing Maximum Access to the Scene

When a disaster occurs it is, due to its very nature, newsworthy. The news media will want to send reporters and photographers to the scene of the disaster. To insure complete and fair coverage they should be permitted access to the scene wherever possible. They cannot, however, be given access when their presence would:

Interfere with damage control, rescue or evacuation measures.

Jeopardize their own safety.

Violate security.[2]

It must be remembered that there are no regulations which prohibit newsmen from visiting the scene of an accident or disaster simply because it takes place on

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[1]Captain J. B. Smith, USN, op. cit.

[2]U. S. Navy, Bureau of Naval Personnel, Navy Training Course: Journalist First Class and Chief, p. 50.

a military installation. If the presence of media representatives meets the above criteria, the P.I.O. should take action to permit entry to the base or installation and to allow them to visit the scene.

When newsmen are permitted access to the disaster scene, the newsmen and the command should first agree to certain ground rules. The ground rules must be based on common sense relative to the special circumstances of the situation. To avoid conflict they should be defined in advance of the visit. The newsmen, for example, might be asked NOT to:

1. Seek interviews with injured personnel or their distraught next of kin.

2. Divulge the names of victims until the next-of-kin have been notified, regardless of the fact that they obtain the information by their own resources.

3. Enter areas which are restricted or which contain classified equipment.

4. Bring heavy equipment or otherwise cumbersome paraphernalia which might interfere with rescue operations or require additional personnel to carry it.

5. Seek interviews with individual rescue workers or the personnel in charge of the operation.

6. Wander from the designated access area in search of additional information or photographs.[1]

Once the newsmen have arrived at the scene they should be given all practicable freedom to move about, take photographs and gather information, as

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[1]Ibid.

long as they observe the ground rules set up in advance. Newsmen are, with few exceptions, trustworthy and can be relied upon to keep their word.

Authoritative Background Information

The equipment involved in naval disasters is often highly technical. The circumstances surrounding a collision at sea or aircraft accident are usually unfamiliar to the layman.

In order to report the facts in context it is important that the media fully understand what has happened. Such understanding may also help them to be sympathetic in their reporting of why it happened.

Technical manuals usually seem confusing and unnecessarily detailed to the uninitiated. The P.I.O., in many cases, cannot explain technicalities or specialized operations. An attempt to do so, without thorough knowledge, can only lead to additional confusion.

Soon after the initial announcement concerning the loss of USS THRESHER on April 19, 1963 the Navy Department made certain technical experts available to answer specialized questions concerning submarine operations.[1] One of these was the former commanding officer of a nuclear submarine. This officer, who himself had taken a nuclear submarine under the Arctic ice fields, spent several hours providing background information to the Pentagon Press Corps. He also

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[1]Based on the personal recollections of the author who was serving in the Office of Information, Navy Department when THRESHER was lost. The officer referred to is Commander James F. Calvert, USN, former commanding officer of the USS SKATE. For details of his Arctic voyages see New York Times, April 8, 1959, p. 7.

appeared in a number of televised interviews. While being careful to avoid speculation as to the cause of the disaster, he did provide enough technical data to enable stories to be written accurately. He was also able to dispel a number of unfounded stories and rumors which circulated soon after the sinking. One reporter interviewed said these briefings contributed greatly to the excellent public relations associated with the THRESHER disaster.[1]

The importance of background information was also evident in the handling of the BENNINGTON disaster in 1953. The official case study had this to say:

> Contrary to popular belief, a major disaster does not necessarily result in bad public relations. From the BENNINGTON disaster emerged numerous stories of individual heroism and self-sacrifice which elicited a sympathetic public response throughout the country. Editorially and otherwise, the press praised the Navy's fast action in saving lives and keeping damage at a minimum. Many newspapers pointed out that such peacetime disasters are the unfortunate but necessary consequence of maintaining the nation's military security.[2]

Background information which may seem to be remote or "too much trouble" in the hectic hours following a disaster may be the most important in the long run.

Debriefing Disaster Survivors

It was noted on several occasions that disaster survivors were interviewed by the press without having been debriefed by the P.I.O. By debriefing we mean a private meeting at which the P.I.O. interviews the survivors to determine their

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[1]Interview with Mr. Elton C. Fay, Associated Press Bureau Chief in the Pentagon, Washington, May 26, 1965.

[2]U. S. Navy, Bureau of Naval Personnel, Navy Training Course: Journalist First Class and Chief, p. 193.

experiences and counsels them about their upcoming meeting with the press. Other cognizant staff personnel must also be present to offer specific guidance. Debriefing may not be possible when newsmen are taken to the disaster scene, but a knowledgable escort can help the newsman to keep information obtained from interviews in context. Individuals in the midst of a disaster often do not know the full story of what has happened. They sometimes tend to generalize statements based on their own experiences in isolated areas of the disaster.

In an operational disaster the survivors may not know exactly what can be said about the work in which they are engaged. One result is that they refuse to answer any questions and therefore become "uncooperative", calling unnecessary attention to the classified circumstances surrounding the accident. There is also the possibility of a survivor performing his own security review based on an incomplete knowledge of the disaster or operation.

Certain survivors may be disgruntled about the operation, the ship, etc. and attempt to lay the blame on faulty equipment, poor leadership, long hours, etc. The press, who have no way of knowing the reliability of the subject, print what they are told. Other survivors may deeply resent prying eyes and vent their feelings on the media representative.

In one notable incident, the crew of a Navy airplane which had been attacked over international waters by a communist aircraft was made available before they could be debriefed by the P.I.O. Unfortunately, many officials at the press conference did not know the specific details concerning the aircraft's mission or the type of equipment it carried. Rather than disclose that the aircraft

carried special equipment in the spaces normally accomodating machine guns, the crewmen stated that the guns had been removed because "spare parts" were not available. This was a cover statement which backfired all the way to the U. S. Congress. To the crewman questioned, this seemed the best thing to say at the time. Navy officials agreed afterwards, that a few minutes privately debriefing the crew would have been time well spent.[1]

Welfare of Next-of-Kin

It is characteristic in the Navy to look after the families of Navymen. The Navy is just as interested in the welfare of the families of Navymen as it is in the welfare of Navymen themselves. When a disaster occurs, the next-of-kin suffer emotional anguish and pain almost equal to the physical suffering of those in the disaster. These people must be protected.

There are a number of ways the P. I. O. can help to ease the suffering of the next-of-kin. One way is to handle the release of news competently. This includes the prompt release of information as it becomes available, particularly the names of casualties, to ease the anxiety of families whose loved ones were not involved.

Many of the next-of-kin live near the base or the homeport of a ship involved in disaster. When the first news of the disaster reaches them they converge on the base to be near the source of information. Handling the next-of-kin is normally the responsibility of the P. I. O. He should make provisions for

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[1]New York Times, June 17 through June 29, 1959.

these people. They should never be left to their own resources or permitted to wait outside the gate for second-hand information.

Following the THRESHER disaster, for instance, special arrangements were made to keep the next-of-kin informed. There was a dependents lounge set up where next-of-kin could wait in comparative physical comfort for the latest information. In addition, one of the officers working with the P.I.O. was designated the Next-of-kin Information and Registration Officer.[1]

Accuracy

In the turmoil of disaster there may be many temptations to rely on memory or to make educated estimates in answer to seemingly inconsequential questions. Newsmen may be pressing from all sides for bits of information which must be laboriously checked to insure accuracy.

The offhand answer to a question such as, "How many men does an airplane like the one that crashed usually carry?, may haunt a P.I.O. for weeks or months. A low estimate might imply the aircraft was permitted to fly with an incomplete crew. An overestimate might excite speculation about a special mission or overloaded airplane.

No detail is too small to confirm in any normal dealings with the press. Checking and rechecking facts in a disaster situation should be standard operating prooedure. It could very well spell the difference between success or failure.

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[1]George M. Hall, CDR, USN, "USS Thresher: Navy Public Relations in a Major Disaster," Public Relations Journal, Vol. XX, No. 7 (July, 1964), p. 7.

In this regard the P.I.O. and his staff must resist efforts by the press to force the answer to a question before it has been authenticated. This is particularly difficult when deadlines approach or the P.I.O. is being pressured by a newsman who is personally known and trusted. Being stampeded into an answer at a time like this can only result in additional problems.

One important aspect of accuracy is the release of names of disaster victims. A mispelled name, wrong initials, incorrect rank or rate can mean unwarranted anxiety or suffering to the next-of-kin. One newsman interviewed was reminded of the crash of a Marine Corps transport which crashed in the late 1950's. The P.I.O. in his haste to oblige newsmen released the flight manifest from another aircraft of the same type which was flying a similar mission on the same day. The identification numbers of the aircraft were similar and were not double-checked before release. In his attempts to provide quick assistance the P.I.O. made a tragic mistake.[1]

Honesty

Honesty in dealing with the press is of prime importance. The circumstances surrounding a disaster are often negative in connotation and sometimes painful to admit. The only solution, however, is complete honesty and candor.

Overt dishonesty is generally not the problem. Many of the facts are readily available or discernible to the press. The problem of indirect dishonesty is most often encountered. Neglecting to tell the whole story or glossing

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[1]Interview with Elton C. Fay, op. cit.

over certain unsavory facts is dishonest. Failing to tell the press that the Commanding Officer of a ship was previously involved in a similar disaster is a form of dishonesty.

Apart from the moral implications of indirect dishonesty is the mundane problem of being caught. Should the press discover the P.I.O.'s dishonesty, and they very often do, the facts withheld assume new importance. Since they are discovered after the basic stories have been written they are singled out for individual attention. They might better have been factually reported deep in some original story.

Impartiality

The main objectives of the P.I.O. in a disaster situation are that the story be reported objectively and that the Navy receive fair treatment. The Navy cannot expect to receive fair treatment from all the media unless all the media are treated equally. The P.I.O. cannot give any information or special advantages to one news medium and withhold it from another. If one newsman is permitted access to the disaster area, all must be permitted the same privilege.

Sometimes there are too many newsmen present at a disaster to permit them all to visit or inspect the scene of disaster. In this instance the press must be requested to pool, or share, certain information. For example, there may be twenty newsmen all requesting permission to go on board a ship which has been involved in a major disaster. Although the dead and injured may have been removed, damage control measures may still be in operation. The officer in charge of the relief operations or the commanding officer may feel that twenty

newsmen could not be properly controlled, might interfer with operations, or be in some personal danger. In a situation such as this, the newsmen would be asked to select two or three members of the group to go aboard and then pass out the information to the others on a pool basis. Normally representatives of different media are selected to insure a cross section of coverage. If one were a newsreel cameraman, for instance, he would make his motion picture film available to all the media who could use the film ie., newsreels, TV, etc. Once this arrangement is made, the pool members are bound to share everything seen, photographed, or recorded with all members of the pool.[1]

Good Taste

Good taste under any circumstances is a subjective determination. However, it is most important to consider in relation to a naval disaster. It is certainly a consideration that the P.I.O. must keep in mind when releasing information or photographs. There are no specific rules or regulations governing good taste. It is a personal evaluation based on experience, judgement and plain common sense.

Newsmen are generally careful about violating good taste. The news media have their own unwritten standards which are usually adequate to protect the disaster victims or their next-of-kin. There are no laws against the publication of "ugly" photographs or news stories, but each newspaper or television station has its own code of ethics. The P.I.O. cannot take "censorship" actions to

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[1]This is established procedure used by media representatives everywhere. It is often employed by the Washington Press Corps. "Pool" coverage was noted on several occasions by the author when he served in the Office of News Service, Department of Defense and in the Office of Navy Information from Jan., 1961 - Aug., 1964.

stop such information from being taken from the scene of the disaster. He must rely on the usual good taste of the individual media.

From the Navy's standpoint, however, the P.I.O. can take action to preserve good taste. This is certainly true in the case of Navy photographers whose pictures will be released to the press. A few of the things the P.I.O. can watch for that might violate good taste are:

1. Photographs of casualties or their next-of-kin when they are in a state of shock.

2. Details of personal conduct of a scandalous nature.

3. Information which might prejudice the rights of an accused or a party to an investigation before these facts are brought out in the open court. [1]

While the P.I.O. cannot stop a newsman or photographer from printing a story in bad taste, he can provide guidance and insure that the ground rules previously agreed upon are adhered to.

Keeping Higher Authority Informed

In a disaster situation the P.I.O. often feels isolated. The importance of the occurrence coupled with the tempo of activities may cause him to forget the outside world. In striving to solve local problems he may neglect others within the Navy who are interested and concerned. They are, in addition, very much involved.

It is important to keep higher authority currently advised. One thing which contributed to the PR success in the THRESHER loss was an open phone line

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[1] U. S. Navy, Bureau of Naval Personnel, Navy Training Course: Journalist First Class and Chief., p. 50.

between the Command Information Bureau in Portsmouth, N. H. and the Office of Information in the Navy Department.[1] The latest information concerning the disaster was coming from Portsmouth but there was intense interest from the Pentagon Press Corps.

Higher authorities are in a position to issue guidance and direction to assist the local P.I.O. It is therefore important that they be constantly apprised of the situation.

Specific Guidlines

In addition to learning the general factors influencing the success or failure of public relations in a disaster the author worked to obtain specific guidlines. Each interviewee and recipient of a questionnaire was asked to state six rules he personally considered most important; three positive and three negative.

Their statements have been analyzed, the most significant thoughts paraphrased and they are presented here in the form of Do's and Don't's. Due to the unique and complex nature of each disaster, there is no attempt to list them in any particular order. To avoid repetition the terms "press", "media", and "newsmen" are used interchangeably.

Do's

DO - Assume the P.I.O. responsibility during a disaster. This is one of the times when his talents are particularly needed.

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[1]George M. Hall, Op. cit., p. 6.

DO - Confer as soon as possible with Navy security experts to establish ground rules for clearing information and photographs and to provide access for the press to the scene of the disaster.

DO - Establish an Information Center which is accessible to the press and clearly marked. Identify this as the place where all official announcements will be made.

DO - Conduct a press briefing as soon as possible after the disaster. This will bring the press up to date rapidly and save briefing each member individually. Announcements and statements should be reproduced and handed out.

DO - Arrange physical services for the Information Center as soon as possible. These would include such things as extra phone lines, typewriters, paper, bulletin board, coffee, etc.

DO - Have a brief meeting with the press after the initial confusion has subsided to establish ground rules of operation satisfactory to the P. I. O. and the press.

DO - Pinpoint the area in which the disaster took place in initial reports, ie. identify the building by number, the exact floor and portion of that floor which was involved. This can comfort thousands of relatives and friends and save many extra phone calls.

DO - Get media representatives, or at least a press pool up to the scene of the disaster as soon as possible. The disaster is what they came to see and report.

DO - Provide the press with identified (arm band) escorts. This further identifies the newsman as being sanctioned to be in the area.

DO - Provide technical experts to brief the media and explain pertinent background information concerning the disaster.

DO - Respond to each question asked. If no answer can be given, the reason why should be explained. A "no comment" can be blown out of proportion in an emergency situation.

DO - Double check each fact before including it in a release or putting it out in answer to a press query.

DO - Establish a policy line as soon as possible, particularly when a higher command or other government agencies are involved.

DO - Establish a working relationship at a level where information will be found, ie, with the officer in charge of the relief efforts. Also be sure to know who will be making operational decisions which may be newsworthy. This will normally be the commanding officer.

DO - Make the commanding officer of the ship involved, commander of the base or appropriate senior officer involved, available to the press as soon as possible.

DO - Make survivors available to the press as soon as possible. Debrief them first. It is best to get this over with quickly and under controlled conditions. The press will want these individuals eventually, and will go to their homes if they are not made available.

DO - Treat all the media the same. Treat them fairly and equally. Playing favorites will only cause trouble.

DO - Be completely honest and candid in all statements within the limits of security.

DO - Release all information as it becomes available. Holding bits of information until there is enough for a "big" release is not at all appreciated by the press.

DO - Know exactly what is going to be said before standing up before the press. Always read announcements. Reproduce and hand out if time allows. Reproduce after the announcement is made in any event.

DO - Try to view the situation from the viewpoint of the press from time to time. This helps to anticipate their needs and questions.

DO - Admit mistakes. They will come out eventually. It is best they come from an official source.

DO - Set up special telephones or Western Union facilities where survivors can contact their next-of-kin. This is not only humanitarian, but saves the P.I.O. from answering many individual queries.

DO - Remember, particularly in non-metropolitan areas that the disaster may be the "big story" of the year. Try to understand why the media are pushing so hard.

DO - Remember that many of the media representatives are local citizens too, and may be emotionally involved in the disaster.

DO - Try to stay ahead of the press with fresh information. Once behind it is difficult to catch up.

DO - Inform whoever is in charge at the scene of the disaster that the P.I.O. is present and is assuming his responsibilities.

DO - Keep the commanding officer informed about what is happening; who from the press is present, what has been said, etc.

DO - Keep higher commands continually informed. Higher commands will also have intense press interest in their areas and will need current information. Open phone lines are the best.

DO - Assemble the names, home towns, and next-of-kin of dead and injured on separate lists as soon as possible.

DO - Provide adequate communications facilities for uninterrupted official and commercial use. At least one phone line must be reserved for the P.I.O.'s use.

DO - Be continually available to the press. Once the P.I.O. has established himself as the official contact, he must be on hand.

DO - Be calm. If the P.I.O. becomes flustered it can only add to the confusion and can easily influence the tone of the stories being filed.

DO - Work to help dependents, families, and friends of those involved in the disaster. They are desperate for information. Provide a dependents lounge close to the information center.

DO - Be aggressive in the quest for information. It is the P.I.O.'s job to do so. It is better that he question officials than isolated members of the press.

DO - Make reassuring statements in the form of status reports whenever possible, for instance when all the injured have been removed to a hospital, etc.

DO - Be positive in a negative situation. The media know that the P.I.O. is working to get information.

DO - Keep members of your own staff informed and up-to-date. They will perform better if they have the latest information.

DO - Make arrangements for the comfort of the press and dependents such as sandwiches, coffee, etc.

DO - Be alert to positive stories which may develop such as the heroic work of relief workers, number of doctors and nurses working to treat survivors, etc.

DO - Pay attention to internal information on the ship, base, etc. Navy personnel and employees should know the full true story so they don't relate half-truths or perpetuate rumors off the base.

DO - Periodically check with decision makers and heads of the relief operations for additional information -- they are busy and may forget to keep the P.I.O. informed.

DO - Maintain a written record of media queries and answers supplied.

DO - Maintain a complete written record or log of what is being done. This will be valuable later. Perhaps one person should be assigned to do nothing but this.

Don't's

DON'T - Keep newsmen peering through the gate by themselves if there is some delay in admitting them to the base. Go out and explain what the problems are. Leave some one with them who can escort them through promptly when proper clearance is obtained.

DON'T - Stay away from the press hoping they will not get the information.

DON'T - Lie under any circumstances.

DON'T - Withhold information or photo cooperation on the basis of "good taste". Security is the only reason for holding back.

DON'T - Invoke the security ban unless it is absolutely necessary. Never classify a situation for humanitarian reasons or to cloak mistakes.

DON'T - Be stampeded or pushed into making premature statements. Release the facts only when you are certain they are facts.

DON'T - Permit newsmen to go off on their own. This often results in embarrassment for the newsman and the P.I.O. This is a ground rule which should be established early in the game.

DON'T - Give names of casualties until next-of-kin have been notified (unless accident is in the public domain), and until they have been double checked.

DON'T - Hold information too long in an effort to get one or two more facts. It is best to release information as it becomes available.

DON'T - Attempt to cover up anything that is apparent or easily obtained, such as, the commanding officer's previous experience in a similar disaster.

DON'T - Disguise reality. Consciously understating or over-stating the seriousness of a disaster will only cause later problems.

DON'T - Speculate, make educated guesses about the cause, or render personal opinions.

DON'T - Manhandle media representatives. Instruct escorts and sentries to notify the P.I.O. if an unforseen situation develops involving the media.

DON'T - Guess or rely on memory in answering queries.

DON'T - Succomb to the temptation to hide even the smallest fact. Something which appears to be completely buried or unobtainable by the press may suddenly burst into the open and embarrass the Navy even worse at a later date.

DON'T - Permit the Commanding Officer or other cognizant personnel to be interviewed without appropriate P.I.O. representation.

DON'T - Bar the press except for their personal safety or for security reasons.

DON'T - Try to sway the press in the Navy's favor except with bonafied facts or pertinent background. Understanding the danger involved in certain operations, for instance, is pertinent to the story. Requests to "give us a break" are not.

DON'T - Try to put a "good side" to the information. This will only end up saving the "bad side" for expanded exploitation later.

DON'T - Be afraid to say "NO" if security regulations or the safety of Navy personnel and the media representatives is threatened.

DON'T - Consider any newsman naive' or inferior. Attempts to ignore, overwhelm, or impress newsmen can backfire in print.

DON'T - Let the Commanding Officer down. Take over as much of the press responsibility as possible.

DON'T - Refer a media representative to someone else for answers or an interview unless proper liason has been previously established.

DON'T - Set up unnecessary restrictions or complicated procedures to impress Navy superiors that the job is being done. The smoother the P.I.O.'s part of the operation progresses, the better.

DON'T - Show favoritism to one medium or media representative. All must get the information at the same time.

DON'T - Give a statement or bit of information to one newsman first due to the pressures of an individual deadline.

DON'T - Become involved in things which don't directly concern the P.I.O. such as handling fire hoses, etc., except in extreme situations where it becomes necessary to the relief effort or to save life.

DON'T - Try to do everything and become hopelessly bogged down in details.

DON'T - Feel it necessary to apoligize to anybody, military or civilian, for aggresive efforts to get the facts. This saves all concerned in the long run, although they may not realize it at the time.

DON'T - Complain to the press about problems with the commanding officer or personnel involved in relief operations. It will do no good and may provide some "juicy" quotes for subsequent stories.

DON'T - Become upset by constructive criticism by the press.

DON'T - Forget the manner in which the P.I.O. conducts himself may influence the tone of the stories about the entire disaster.

DON'T - Concentrate on the media present to the exclusion of those who are not. One reliable and quick outlet is the local radio station which will tape and broadcast disaster information.

DON'T - Wait for information. Run it down and get it out.

DON'T - Let the commanding officer set up undesirable barriers to the press or make arbitrary decisions due to the lack of established policy. Get on the phone to higher authority so that "guidance" may be sent down the chain of command.

DON'T - Attempt to try anyone or any cause in the public press. Stay fair and objective. No inferences.

DON'T - Try to cover up the findings of a formal investigation on the flimsy grounds that they are classified. By so doing, much good which may have resulted from prompt and efficient handling in the initial phases may be undone.

Specific Recommendations From Two Naval Disasters

The foregoing sections have presented a number of general and specific recommendations compiled from the experiences encountered in a number of naval disasters. It is also profitable to examine the comments and suggestions for handling naval disasters which have resulted from the experience of one Navy P.I.O. in handling two specific disasters. It is interesting to note the basic similarities between the comments of this one officer and those recommendations compiled by the author from numerous interviews, case studies, and questionnaires.

The P.I.O. who handled both the BENNINGTON and LEYTE disasters made these comments and suggestions:

> Release as much information as possible the first day to prevent the spread of rumors. This is the surest way to quell speculation and possible sensationalism.
>
> Keep the record straight by coordinating the releases of statements from different spokesmen. Try to keep the number of "official spokesmen" to a minimum to avoid issuing conflicting reports.
>
> Use the services of the (nearest) District Public Information Officer and his staff. The District P.I.O. is trained and experienced in public relations, knows the media representatives in the area, and has access to the necessary personnel, equipment and facilities.
>
> In almost every disaster situation, there are many examples of heroic actions. Rescue crews pulling injured from flaming wreckage, men risking their lives to save the lives of their shipmates are both excellent and extremely timely subjects for making good press in the face of apparent disaster. Intelligent and rapid coverage of these actions can often turn the tables on a bad press and can leave a very favorable impression on the reader's minds.

Set up a Command Information Bureau (CIB) ashore if the disaster occurs at sea. Shore-based commanders should provide as much help as possible so as not to overburden the personnel and facilities of the disaster-stricken ship.

Request that additional telephones be made available ashore by contacting the local telephone company. The telephones not only enable newsmen to get their stories out, but also allow the uninjured or slightly injured to contact their families.

Request the assistance of Western Union in handling stock messages such as "I am well and safe," for personnel involved in the disaster.

Seek the services of an expert -- military or civilian -- who can explain the benefits available to the next-of-kin. The service should not be established, however, until dependents and next-of-kin have sufficient time to recover from grief.

When the Board of Inquiry is convened, try to make it an open court to prevent news media from getting the impression that the Navy has something to hide. The P.I.O. should be an advisor to the Court or should be the sole spokesman for the court.

Set up a 24-hour watch of competent public information personnel in the CIB for several days to answer the queries from news media and questions from next-of-kin.

List casualties in three categories on the casualty list: (1) known dead, (2) severely injured, and (3) slightly injured. All names in all three categories should be numbered for easy reference. Casualty lists should also be labeled as Alpha, Bravo, etc. If additional names are later added to list Alpha, for example, then Addendum 1 to list Alpha should be released. Further additions would be on Addendum 2, Addendum 3, etc.

Give the Commander and the P.I.O. a free hand in releasing information without interference from higher authority. It is only on the scene of a disaster that it is possible to evaluate this type of information.

Set a specific time for releasing the names of casualties, then stick

to it. Make sure that the lists are checked, double-checked, then verified again to be absolutely correct.[1]

Conclusion

Each naval disaster is essentially unique. There are, however, a number of demonstrated similarities in each. These similarities permit ships and bases to prepare for the physical aspects of disaster. Each ship for instance has a number of Emergency Bills (Disaster Plans) ie. Collision, Man Over Board, Search and Rescue, and Abandon Ship. These enable the ship to act swiftly and surely in the face of predictable disaster.

There are also certain demonstrated similarities encountered in handling the public relations aspects of naval disasters. The comments and recommendations contained in this chapter represent the combined experience gained in many naval disasters over the past twenty years. They are basic to the planning necessary for successful public relations in naval disasters of the future.

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[1]U. S. Navy, Office of Information, Case Study of Public Relations Aspects of the USS BENNINGTON Disaster, pp. 6-7.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of this study have shown that there are certain fundamental similarities in all disaster situations. The results have further determined that there are public relations actions which may be taken in any naval disaster.

These findings indicate that while disasters are unexpected, preparations can be made to successfully combat them. This concept of advance planning is particularly applicable to the handling of public relations in naval disasters.

The conclusions of this study concerning public relations in naval disasters are:

> To handle public relations in a naval disaster most successfully it is necessary to prepare a written Public Relations Disaster Plan in advance.
>
> Due to the size of the United States Navy, the worldwide scope of its operations, and equipments used, it is not practicable to prepare an overall Public Relations Disaster Plan covering all contingencies in the Navy.
>
> Public Relations Disaster Plans can and should be prepared by individual naval commands and for specialized naval operations based on predictable contingencies and local circumstances.
>
> The lessons learned from naval disasters of the past provide important guidance for the preparation of individual Public Relations Disaster Plans.

The objective of this study is to provide documented criteria for the conduct of successful public relations in naval disasters. This has been done in part

by presenting general and specific actions which have been taken in past naval disasters. The mere presentation of past actions is meaningless, however, unless the lessons derived from them are systematically applied to the predictable problems of future disasters.

These lessons, therefore, have been analyzed and refined to provide the basic ingredients for the actual design of practical Public Relations Disaster Plans by individual commands.

Public Relations Objectives in a Naval Disaster

One of the first steps to be taken in attempting to solve any public relations problem is to establish goals or objectives. As elementary or obvious as this may be, it is one of the first things that is frequently forgotten in a disaster situation. For this reason it is important that the Navy's public relations objectives in disaster be recognized as the basic ingredient to the Public Relations Disaster Plan. There are three objectives:

To retain public confidence in the Navy.

To preserve good media relations.

To protect and promote the welfare of Navy personnel and their families.[1]

In addition to these objectives or goals the P.I.O. has certain immediate and continuing responsibilities in a disaster:

To safeguard classified information and material.

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[1]U. S., Bureau of Naval Personnel, Navy Training Course: Journalist First Class and Chief, NAVPERS 10295 (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1961), p. 45.

> To release all information compatible with the requirements of security and good taste.
>
> To provide news media with maximum practicable access to the accident scene and a continuous flow of information regarding the disaster.
>
> To release the names of casualties as soon as possible.[1]

Prior Planning

Disaster public relations experts agree that the key to successful action in a disaster situation is the existence of a written, previously formulated plan.

In their textbook on public relations, Cutlip and Center have observed:

> There is one type of event which cannot be forecast -- a catastrophe. But it can be planned for. Every institution and industry is subject to the fate of disaster and should plan accordingly. When it happens, time is the key element in the handling of communication. There is not time to plan cautiously and carefully a program of information. Plans made far in advance for calamity procedure must go into action. The on-the-spot planning which would normally be given weeks must be crammed into a few minutes, or a few hours at most.[2]

One Navy P.I.O. who made a detailed study of the public relations aspects of the loss of the nuclear submarine THRESHER had a similar observation:

> The time to make decisions on the broad questions of philosophy and organization is when things are quiet and can be considered calmly and objectively. When there is no pressure, the public information officer can often win approval for basic policies, like full cooperation with the press and absolute candor, that he might be able to obtain only with difficulty when the instinct for self-preservation is at its peak -- in the moment of a crisis.[3]

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Scott M. Cutlip and Allen H. Center, Effective Public Relations (3rd ed. rev.: Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1964), p. 142.

[3] Joseph W. Stierman, Jr., LCDR, USN, "Public Relations Aspects of a Major Disaster: A Case Study of the Loss of USS THRESHER," (unpublished M.S. Thesis, School of Public Communication, Boston University, 1964), p. 152.

These statements only reaffirm the contention often repeated in this study that the most important actions taken by the P.I.O. to handle the public relations aspect of a disaster are those taken far in advance. They also point up the importance of rehearsing the plan periodically.

Two Disaster Plans Necessary

To best meet his daily commitments and fulfill his responsibilities in a disaster, the P.I.O. must prepare two Disaster Plans. One, which will be called the Command Plan, would be issued by the command in the form of an official directive or appended to any master disaster plan as a public information annex. The Command Plan would promulgate broad information policies and designate overall responsibilities to staff departments or individual staff billets relative to the handling of public relations in a disaster.

In addition, the P.I.O. must prepare an Office Plan outlining the detailed actions to be taken by himself and his staff to fulfill their designated responsibilities.

The Command Plan

The Command Plan provides a solid base for the P.I.O. in a disaster. By being promulgated as a Directive it is officially sanctioned by the Commanding Officer. It assures cooperation of everybody in the command. It specifically outlines the commands objectives and the responsibilities of the P.I.O. and other departments in the command. In the absence of the P.I.O. it also serves as a general guide to whatever officer is appointed to take his place.

The Command Plan might look something like this:

Base Directive 5720.1

From: Commanding Officer

To: Distribution

Subj: Public Information Disaster Plan

Ref: (a) Navy Public Information Manual

(b) Bureau of Naval Personnel Manual

1. Purpose. To promulgate policy and establish responsibilities for the efficient handling and release of information concerning base personnel and units involved in a disaster.

2. Policy.

a. The basic public information policy of the Navy as promulgated by reference (a) is "to keep the public informed of the activities of the Navy as compatible with military security." Commanding officers are responsible for the implementation of the public information policies and programs of the Navy Department and for the conduct of public information within their commands.

b. The timely release of unclassified information and other actions necessary to keep the public informed are mandatory in the event of any disaster occurring on this Base.

3. Definition. Disaster in the context of this Directive is considered to be any naturally caused or man-made incident which:

a. Causes personnel casualties, whether to military or civilian personnel, which results in death, being placed in a "missing" status, or injuries serious enough to require hospitalization.

b. Cause major damage or destruction to material.

c. Any other accident or incident which could be or could become the subject of press interest.

4. Responsibilities. In support of the information policies of this command the following specific responsibilities are delegated and assigned in the event of a disaster:

a. Public Information Officer. The Public Information Officer (P. I. O.) is responsible to the commanding officer for all public information aspects of the disaster including the release of pertinent information, liaison with news media representatives and liaison with next-of-kin and relatives who approach the Base in search of information. He will take the necessary actions to keep the Commanding Officer and higher authorities continually informed concerning the informational aspects of the disaster. In the event that civilian relief organizations are needed to assist in relief operations, he will establish and maintain liaison with the information representatives of those organizations.

The Public Information Officer will be the sole releasing authority for all information and as such will coordinate all reports relative to the disaster. Time and physical circumstances permitting, he will clear all major announcements or releases of information, prior to public dissemination, with the Commanding Officer.

He will, with the assistance of other Base personnel, take the actions necessary to fulfill his responsibilities. These might include the establishment of a Press Information Center, Next-Of-Kin Lounge, Press Transportation Pool, Photographic Team, etc.

b. Security Officer. The Base Security Officer will ascertain at the earliest possible moment the security implications of the disaster relative to the release of information

and access of newsmen to the scene and communicate his findings to the P.I.O. He will maintain constant liaison with the P.I.O. to provide continuous security guidance. He will, if possible, accompany the P.I.O. and press to the scene of the disaster and be present at all press briefings or conferences. If the Security Officer cannot be present he will send a suitable representative.

c. Disaster Officer. The Officer designated as the Disaster Officer in charge of relief operations at the disaster scene will provide the P.I.O. with assistance in obtaining information for release and in providing access to the disaster scene for media representatives and release at the first opportunity. It is important that this officer provide a continuous flow of pertinent information to the P.I.O. for subsequent release. The containment of a fire, rescue of trapped personnel, removal of all the dead and injured, etc. are the types of information which must be immediately communicated to the P.I.O. or his representative.

d. Personnel Officer. The Base Personnel Officer will maintain close liaison with the P.I.O. to facilitate the release of casualty lists in accordance with reference (b). He will immediately inform the P.I.O. when receipts from next-of-kin notifications have been received. In addition, the Personnel Officer will provide such personnel services as may be required by the P.I.O. to properly augment his staff with clerical help, escorts, messengers, food handlers, drivers, photographers, and personnel to render general assistance. He will also provide officer personnel to act as assistants to the P.I.O. in capacities such as Next-Of-Kin Information and Liaison Officer, Communications Liaison Officer, Administrative Assistant, and Technical Information Officer.

e. Communications Officer. The Base Communications Officer will supply the necessary assistance needed to augment the telephone, teletype, and intercommunications

systems in the Public Information Office, Next-Of-Kin Lounge, Press Information Center, and at other appropriate locations. Where necessary he will assist the P.I.O. to obtain additional assistance from commercial communications organizations such as the Telephone Company, Western Union Telegraph Company, etc. He will assist the P.I.O. in establishing prompt and continuous communication with higher naval authority.

f. Supply Officer. The Base Supply Officer will assist the Public Information Officer with the facilities available to his department. As specified by the P.I.O., he will supply tables, chairs, typewriters, clerical incidentals, cots, coffee urns and coffee, food as necessary, dishes and implements, and other items in the supply inventory which will assist the P.I.O. to fulfill his responsibilities in the best possible manner.

g. Transportation Officer. Will provide as feasible, not to interfere with relief operations, vehicles necessary to meet the transportation requirements of the P.I.O. in meeting his responsibilities.

h. All Base Personnel. Other personnel who may be directly or indirectly involved in the disaster are reminded that the P.I.O. is the designated releasing authority for all information concerning the disaster. They should not engage in interviews, volunteer information, or otherwise communicate with media representatives except to provide normal courtesies such as directions or general instructions. If an individual feels he is the holder of information pertinent to the disaster he should convey that information to the P.I.O. for coordination and release. All personnel are further directed to cooperate in any way possible with the P.I.O. to assist him in fulfilling his responsibilities.

5. Action. This Directive applies to all personnel, military and civilian, attached to this command. Department Heads are directed to bring the contents of this Directive to the attention of all their personnel and to make it a permanent part of Department Operational Disaster Plans. They are further directed to effect immediate and continuing liaison with the Public Information Officer in order to prepare detailed lists of requirements commensurate with his responsibilities as specified by this directive.

/s/J. P. Boatright
J. P. Boatright
Rear Admiral, U. S. Navy
Base Commander

The Command Plan would, of course, contain other details in accordance with the specific requirements of the individual command. In the case of a ship, for instance, specific responsibilities might be delegated to the Gunnery Officer, Nuclear Weapons Officer, Engineering Officer, etc. Naval Bases and installations may be engaged in specialized activities such as the testing of new equipment, training of Fleet personnel, or support of Fleet units. In each case the Command Plan must be altered to encompass the disaster contingencies anticipated as a result of the specialized activities of the individual commands.

The P.I.O.'s Office Plan

To successfully meet and fulfill his responsibilities in a disaster situation, the P.I.O. must prepare a written Office Plan. This must outline the actions to be taken by himself and his staff. Appended to this plan would be the specialized information, check-off lists, phone lists, etc., which would assist the P.I.O. and his staff to act quickly and efficiently when disaster strikes.

The Office Plan can be much less formal than the Command Plan. It might be promulgated as in interoffice memorandum:

MEMORANDUM

From: Public Information Officer

To: Public Information Staff

Subj: Public Relations in a Naval Disaster

Ref: (a) Command Public Relations Disaster Plan

1. Background. In accordance with the responsibilities assigned this office by reference (a), the actions outlined in this memorandum will be taken by staff personnel in the event of a naval disaster.

2. General Action to be Taken. When disaster, as defined by reference (a) occurs on this base, the Public Information Staff must immediately report to their assigned posts. If it is not possible to do so in a reasonable time, you are requested to contact the P.I.O. at your earliest opportunity to report your status (unless of course you are on authorized leave many miles distant, etc.). In the event of a disaster, the Public Information Staff may be required to remain close to the office for several days. It is recommended that when you report you bring one change of clothing and basic toilet articles.

3. Specific Assignments.

a. Duty Journalist. This individual stands his watch in the public information office and will be notified by the Command Duty Officer of any disaster. He will immediately notify all Public Information Staff Personnel of the disaster and direct them to report to their posts. After the arrival of the P.I.O., he will proceed to his assigned post.

b. Public Information Officer. Will proceed to the Public Information Office, which he will then designate the Command Information Bureau (CIB). He will take the necessary action to prepare the initial statement reporting the disaster to the media. This first announcement should be cleared by the Commanding Officer if at all possible. The P.I.O. will be in charge of the CIB for the duration of the disaster period.

c. Assistant P.I.O. Will proceed immediately to the Main Gate to ascertain the situation, which he will report to the P.I.O. as soon as possible. Unless otherwise notified by the P.I.O., he will act as the Media Liaison Officer for the duration of the disaster operation.

d. Chief Journalist. Will report immediately to the CIB to act as the P.I.O.'s Administrative Assistant. He will take the necessary steps to establish a Press Information Center in Room 794, adjacent to the CIB. This will be for the use of media representatives for the duration of the disaster operation.

e. Civilian Secretary. Will report immediately to the CIB and report to the P.I.O. Her primary duties, at least in initial phases, will consist of establishing telephone contacts with the news media, other base departments and offices, and higher authorities -- the P.I.O. at Atlantic Fleet Headquarters and the Chief of Information Duty Officer -- immediately, and others as directed by the P.I.O.

f. First Class Journalist. Report immediately to the CIB. Immediately prepare the mimeograph machine and stand by for typing and reproduction of the initial statement. At first opportunity take necessary steps to establish a Next-of-Kin Lounge in Room 799 for use by Next-of-Kin, relatives, fiances, etc., of the personnel involved in the

disaster. He will act as the coordinator for the reproduction and dissemination of subsequent news releases.

g. Other Personnel. Report immediately to the P.I.O. in the CIB for further assignment.

4. In a disaster occurring on this base the Commanding Officer and the media will be depending on this office to immediately assume the responsibility for the prompt and continuous flow of information. This is an important job, and a big one. Your individual duties are most important to the success of the entire operation.

Respectfully,

/s/Farragut Jones
CDR, U. S. Navy
Public Information Officer

Even this Plan cannot hope to completely detail all the actions to be taken by the individual personnel throughout the duration of the disaster. However, it does outline the immediate actions to be taken by each member of the staff and does assign general responsibilities to each for the duration. It serves to get everyone started. It is then up to the P.I.O. to adjust his resources and make specific assignments based on the specialized requirements of the disaster.

An Operational P.I.O. Plan even simpler than the one outlined above was activated on April 28, 1965 by the P.I.O. at the FOURTEENTH Naval District in Hawaii. A fire of undetermined origin leveled the Pearl Harbor Naval Exchange Warehouse, resulting in more than one-half million dollars loss.[1] It began in the late

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[1]Letter from LCDR Robert M. Hartian, USNR, Public Information Officer, FOURTEENTH Naval District, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, June 21, 1965.

evening hours. The P.I.O. Plan was activated with gratifying results. The P.I.O. who handled the fire had this to say about the results of his Plan:

> I was first informed of the fire by the duty office, and immediately proceeded to the scene where I determined that there were no security problems. I next advised my office, which was fully manned, of the situation and authorized a statement for release to all news media. Media representatives were admitted to the Base (by P.I.O. personnel stationed there by the Plan) and I took them to the scene where they observed the fire and interviewed, as available, 'people in the know.' Having located a telephone on the scene, I kept the line open so that I could pass information to my office, where queries were answered and 'stireps' (situation reports) issued. By 2:30 a.m., we had issued a 'wrap-up' story with photos, to all local news media.
>
> As evidence of news media satisfaction of P.I.O. assistance, the Commandant of the FOURTEENTH Naval District received several telephone calls the next day from editors and bureau chiefs expressing their appreciation for the prompt public information support.[1]

Miscellaneous Information Appended to the Office Plan

Most important to the success of the Office Plan are the various informational materials, check lists, phone lists, etc. which will be appended to it. The specific information and manner of presentation will of course differ with individual P.I.O.'s and Commands. The type of data will however, be much the same anywhere and would include many or all of the following:

Policy Materials

The P.I.O. must have selected policy materials close at hand to facilitate the release of information. The Command Plan will of course be a big help, but the

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[1] Ibid.

Commanding Officer and other staff officers may want to see specific references authorizing action. These would include:

> Pertinent Naval Instructions both local and from higher authority.
>
> Reproduced excerpts from pertinent manuals, ie. The Public Information Manual, Bureau of Naval Personnel Manual, Security Manual, Navy Photographic Manual, and the Manual of the Judge Advocate General.
>
> Sample releases made in other disasters to illustrate what has been done in the past. Statements made by the Chief of Naval Operations in regard to the loss of USS THRESHER for instance might prove useful.[1]
>
> Brief case studies of past disasters containing recommendations for handling disasters such as the one issued by the Navy Department concerning USS LEYTE and BENNINGTON disasters.[2]

Background Materials

Background materials will probably constitute the majority of what is appended to the Office Plan. It may not be possible to physically append all such material, but a notation stating from where it is available is necessary. Background materials might include:

> History of the command.
>
> Descriptive presentation of the command's functions and missions.
>
> Fact sheets on command and the various ships, aircraft, missiles, etc. which might be assigned.
>
> Biography and photographs of the commanding officer.

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[1] Stierman, op. cit., pp. 161-2.

[2] U. S. Navy, Office of Information, Case Study of Public Relations Aspects of USS BENNINGTON Disaster, CHINFO NOTICE 5720 -- Guidance for public relations handling of Naval Disasters (Washington: U. S. Navy, Office of Information, 1954).

Background on units likely to be involved in disaster relief activities such as the fire station, hospital, etc.

Definitions of naval terms and nomenclature peculiar to your base, command, ship, or operation.

List of all material in the command which is of a sensitive nature or which may require special security treatment.

In commands having specialized missions, such as testing aircraft, a detailed biography of all test pilots.

Fact sheets concerning normal naval activities performed by units or ships which could be involved in disaster. In the Service Force, for example, a fact sheet might be prepared explaining how ship's replenish underway at sea.

History or fact sheet of previous disasters in the Command.

General hometown information on all military personnel.

File photograph of all personnel.

One minute, 16mm, motion picture film clips of equipment, aircraft, ships, etc. assigned to the command.[1]

A Navy Job Code Manual which explains the duties of each enlisted rating in the Navy.

Up-to-date statistics concerning personnel, production, etc. concerning the command.

Information on any local materials which might cause anxiety in a disaster, ie. chlorine gas, nuclear materials, etc.

List of what relief facilities are immediately available to next-of-kin, ie. survivors benefits, death gratuity payment, etc.

Check-Off Lists

Check-off lists can be extremely helpful in a disaster situation. It is impossible

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[1]These are available to commands on request from the Naval Photographic Center, Anacostia, D. C.

to remember everything when things get confusing. These lists supplement the P.I.O.'s memory and should be as detailed as possible. No item is too small to include. They should not, however, be prepared for every conceivable activity. This can lead to further work for the staff and additional confusion. Check-off lists might be prepared for the following:

Physical necessities for the Press Information Center and Next-of-Kin Lounge.

Transportation requirements.

Ground rule items to be discussed with media representatives.

Experts in various activities of the command.

Official reports which must be filed by the P.I.O.

Communications facilities needed.

Phone Numbers

The telephone will be a major tool for the P.I.O. in a disaster situation. He will want a compact list of the people and places he will most certainly contact. Home and business numbers must be included.

Careful attention must be given to this list to insure that it doesn't become too cumbersome to be useful. Listing all the contacts alphabetically for instance may prove frustrating when a number is needed quickly and the name is forgotten. It is better to first divide the list into meaningful categories. These might include:

Personnel assigned to the Information Office.

News media representatives and stringers.

Strategic base personnel, such as department head, fire chief, duty officers, officer in charge of the guard posts, etc.

Current list of Navy P.I.O.'s worldwide.

Strategic civilian agencies such as the Fire and Police Departments, Red Cross, Civil Defense.

Strategic personnel in the chain of command between your command and the highest authority.

Special local individuals such as the telephone company representative who could assign radio trucks or assist in obtaining open phone lines -- the local Western Union Manager, etc.

Prepared Forms and Samples

In all Navy commands there are a number of prescribed forms necessary to obtain certain materials or to accomplish certain tasks. In addition, the P.I.O. may wish to design a number of specialized forms to facilitate speedy action. These might include:

Long distance phone authorizations.

Navy and Western Union message blanks.

Query sheets for incoming queries with space for name of caller, return number, organization represented, specific question, time of call, etc.

Fact sheet for outgoing query calls basically designed with Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How in mind.

Sample naval message outlining who in chain of command must be included on all outgoing messages.

Sample request for helicopter services.

Request forms for base transportation.

Forms on which the P.I.O. may make periodic reports to the commanding officer regarding the informational aspects of the disaster to include items such as total queries received, newsmen on the base, releases made, cumulative statistics of P.I.O. activities and significant events since the last report. This would permit a brief report to be made hourly, or more often, if necessary.

Sample official letters permitting media representatives to travel in naval ships and aircraft.

Blank waiver forms to be signed by press prior to embarking in Navy ships or aircraft.

Sample naval message to ships or remote units requesting disaster information.

Sample reports to higher authority.

Sample forms which would facilitate maintaining a log or running description of the P.I.O. activities to be used in later writing a comprehensive report.

Personnel Augmentation Information

In the event of a major prolonged disaster the P.I.O. will need additional personnel from without his office. He must have pertinent information concerning the augmentation of his staff. He might prepare a list which would include:

Reserve P.I.O.'s in the immediate area who could come on active duty at short notice.

Active duty P.I.O.'s within a certain radius who might supply personnel assistance.

Names of enlisted personnel from other departments in the command particularly well suited to function as messengers, escorts, typists, food handlers, etc.

Names of officers from other departments who might serve in specialized capacities such as Next-of-kin Information Officer, Administrative Assistant, etc.

Names of photographic personnel with the demonstrated ability to obtain good press-type coverage.

Experts in various specialties who could be called upon to provide technical background information or could be interviewed by media representatives.

Miscellaneous Physical Items

There are a number of physical items which the P.I.O. will need in a disaster. Many of them are too large or cumbersome to retain physically, but the P.I.O. must know how to get them and where they can be obtained on short notice. They would include items such as:

Large maps of the base or command area for posting in the CIB, Press Information Center, and Next-of-Kin Lounge.

Small maps for handout to the media and next-of-kin.

Large blank poster boards or prepared signs to identify spaces, automobiles, etc.

Magic markers or felt pens for preparing signs.

A small functional library which would contain useful books such as the various applicable Navy manuals, Fahey's Ships and Aircraft of the U. S. Fleet, Jane's Fighting Ships, World Almanac, etc.

Official guest tags for media representatives, next-of-kin, and other visitors.

Base camera passes for civilian cameramen.

First aid kit including materials for treating minor cuts, etc. This should also contain accepted materials for treating headache, upset stomach or tension.

Arm bands or large identification tags for Public Information Staff personnel.

Name tags and holders for media representatives, in addition to Base tag.

Shortwave radio in the event telephone communications are knocked out by the disaster.

"Bull horns" for communicating with staff personnel or media representatives at the disaster scene.

Detailed floor plans or ship blueprints to be used in briefing sessions.

Public Relations Disaster Kit

All of the materials which the author recommends supplement the P.I.O. Office Plan cannot be physically appended to the Plan. However, a great deal of them can and should be.

This study has emphasized that disasters are usually unexpected and that advance planning is necessary. The Office Plan and the materials used to support it must be immediately available and ready for use when disaster does occur.

The Office Plan and those materials which can be physically appended to it, should be gathered together in the form of a "Public Relations Disaster Kit." The kit might be any separate container such as a briefcase, file cabinet or desk drawer. The materials can be periodically inventoried and brought up-to-date. In the absence of the P.I.O. the kit provides the basic tools and guidance for the office staff and the officer who may be designated as the acting P.I.O.

The "Public Relations Disaster Kit" is one other way the P.I.O. can prepare to best meet his responsibilities in a disaster situation.

Informal Disaster Manual

The P.I.O. will need the understanding and support of a great many people in a disaster situation. In addition to the commanding officer, department heads and other personnel assigned to assist him, he may directly or indirectly rely on every person assigned to the command. He should take steps to inform all command personnel about the basic aims and objectives of the P.I.O. in disaster.

Even in normal times preceding a disaster, it is unlikely that the P.I.O. will have the time or opportunity to brief each person in the command. However, one effective way he can communicate with them is with an informal manual, pamphlet or brochure. The preparation and distribution of this type of manual is particularly important in a command which may predict certain types of disaster due to specialized activities. These commands would include Naval Air Stations, Test Facilities, Training Commands, Ammunition Depots and the like.

The Texas Gas Transmission Corporation of Owensboro, Kentucky is concerned about explosive accidents involving its facilities. The Director of Public Relations has prepared a simplified and easily understood manual designed to "assist employees in their contact with the press in the event of an accident or emergency."[1] This manual, "Meet The Press", contains the basic public relations objectives and policies of the company in a disaster situation. Cartoon-like illustrations enhance its appearance and serve to retain interest and attention. The descriptive subtitles are indicative of the material contained:

Meet The Press

The Reporter's Viewpoint

What the Reporter Wants

Who Is The Company's Spokesman?

Be Careful What You Say

Courtesy Is Important

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[1]"Meet The Press," (Owensboro, Ky.: Texas Gas Transmission Corporation, N. D.), title page.

DON'T

After It's Over[1]

A copy of this manual has been appended to this study as Appendix C. It is worthy of special note and will serve as an excellent guide for the preparation of similar manuals by individual commands.

Summary

There are a number of common factors and individual actions which are applicable to any naval disaster. However to be properly utilized and applied in a disaster situation, they must be recognized and understood. It is unusually difficult to make objective value judgements in the turmoil of disaster. The single most important conclusion of this study is that the success or failure of public relations in a naval disaster is the result of detailed preparation and planning, or the lack of it.

A written disaster plan is the best way to prepare for disaster. However, due to the size of the United States Navy, the geographical scope of its activities, and the variety of specialized operations it is not practicable to prepare a detailed master plan for universal application. Separate plans must be prepared by individual naval commands based on predictable contingencies and local circumstances. The lessons learned from naval disasters of the past provide important guidance to be used in the preparation of local plans.

It is essential to successful public relations in future naval disasters that the Office of Information, Navy Department take the following actions:

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[1]Ibid., p. 7.

Instruct major commands in the United States Navy to prepare detailed Public Relations Disaster Plans in accordance with a specified format (similar perhaps to those presented in this study), to be implemented in the event of a naval disaster.

Instruct major commands to insure that all ships, units, and installations under their cognizance adopt the Command Plan or design a similar plan in accordance with specialized needs.

Distribute detailed background information, case studies and analyses of public relations in past naval disasters, and continuing guidance relative to the successful practice of public relations in future naval disasters to all commands in the United States Navy.

Implications for Further Study

This study has presented conclusions and recommendations for public relations in naval disaster. To do so, it has been necessary to consolidate factors and cluster actions to make them applicable to all types of naval disasters. It has been necessary to present them in a common perspective. Certain of them are, of course, more applicable to one situation than another. Some of the actions listed may be highly important in a fire, for instance, and of minor concern in a hurricane. While unavoidable, this approach has opened new avenues worth exploring. Separate studies concerning public relations in specialized disaster situations would be a most valuable contribution to public relations in general, and to Navy public information in particular. Only one such specialized study has been undertaken. It concerns the public relations aspects of the loss of the nuclear submarine THRESHER.[1] Others are needed.

One aspect of public relations in a naval disaster only slightly considered by this study is the predisposition of the press and public to the news of a naval disaster. In this regard the Navy suffers from the effects of a strange paradox. Navy recruiters

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[1]Stierman, op. cit., n.p.

are busy extolling the advantages and comforts associated with life in the Navy. The inherent dangers are seldom if ever discussed. As a result the public finds it difficult to sympathetically understand the circumstances surrounding many man-made naval disasters, while prepared, for instance, to accept the news of civilian airplane accidents. This is an area which might be profitably studied to determine how the public might be prepared for the impact of a naval disaster and still maintain the Navy's personnel levels with voluntary enlistments.

Students interested in public relations in specialized disaster situations, will find the field almost untouched. The problem of educating the public about naval disasters while at the same time recruiting them to service is complex and intriguing.

APPENDIX A

A chronology of major naval disasters since 1775. The information has with few exceptions been excerpted from A Chronology of the U. S. Navy: 1775-1965, a new book by LCDR David M. Cooney, USN.

The names of naval officers entered after the names of some ships are of the commanding officers unless otherwise noted. Certain entries show the number of guns aboard sailing ships (in parenthesis after the ship's name).

U. S. NAVY DISASTER CHRONOLOGY

DATE	DESCRIPTION
Nov., 1778 (exact date unknown	REPRISAL foundered off Newfoundland. All Hands lost but the ship's cook.
Aug. 8, 1800	INSURGENT (36 guns), Captain Patrick Fletcher, sailed from Norfolk, Va. for the West Indies and was never seen again; 340 lives lost.
Aug. 20, 1800	PICKERING (14) sailed fron New Castle, Delaware for Guadalupe and was never seen again; 90 lives lost.
June 20, 1805	GUNBOAT NO. 7 sailed from New York for the Mediterranean and she disappeared with all hands.
Oct., 1810 (exact date unknown)	GUNBOAT NO. 159 lost in gale off St. Mary's, all hands lost.
Feb. 2, 1811	USS REVENGE (12 guns), wrecked off Newport, R.I., by careless pilot, no casualties.
Oct., 1811 (exact date unknown)	GUNBOAT NO. 2 wrecked off St. Mary's. 28 were killed; 2 survivors.
Sept. 16, 1812	GUNBOATS NO. 62, 161, and 164 were sunk in a gale off St. Mary's. 20 lives were lost.
Oct. 29, 1812	GUNBOAT NO. 46 was wrecked off Newport, R.I. 10 lives were lost.
Aug. 8, 1813	HAMILTON (19 guns) and SCOURGE (10 guns) foundered in heavy weather on Lake Ontario while sailing to engage a British squadron. Great loss of life.

Feb. 22, 1814	USS FERRET (8 guns), schooner, wrecked at Stone Inlet, North Carolina. All hands were saved.
June 30, 1814	Schooner ALLIGATOR (14 guns), capsized in a gale off the North Carolina coast with a loss of 21 lives. She was later raised and placed in service.
Oct. 9, 1814	USS WASP disappeared. On this date she informed the Swedish brig ADONIS she was "standing for the Spanish Main." Never seen again. 140 lives lost.
Sept. 23, 1814	GUNBOAT NO. 140 was accidentally blown up at Ocra Coke Inlet, N. C. with a loss of 9 lives.
July 14, 1815	USS EPERVIER (18 guns), Master Commandant J. Downey sailed from Tripoli on 10 July for the United States carrying dispatches from Commodore Stephan Decatur, Commander of the U. S. Mediterranean Squadron. She passed Gibraltar this date, and was never seen again. On this same date the GUNBOAT NO. 152 was struck by lightening and blown up in the Mississippi River; 27 casualties.
Jan. 11, 1820	USS LYNX (six guns), Lieutenant J. R. Madison, with a crew of 50, sailed for the Gulf of Mexico and was never seen again.
Nov. 19, 1822	USS ALLIGATOR (12 guns), Lieutenant W. W. McKean, was wrecked on Carysfort Reef in the West Indies. Her crew was later rescued.
July 9, 1823	USS ENTERPRISE (12 guns) wrecked off Little Curacao, West Indies.
Oct. 28, 1824	USS WILD CAT (3 guns), with a crew of 14, sailed from Cuba for Thompson's Island in the West Indies and was never seen again.
Feb. 4, 1825	USS FERRET (9 guns), capsized in a squall off Cuba. Five men were drowned.
June 4, 1829	USS FULTON, the Navy's first steamer exploded at Brooklyn, N. Y. killing 24, including one woman, and injuring 19.

Sept. 10, 1829	USS HORNET (18 guns), was driven from her anchorage off Tampico, Mexico by a gale. She was never seen again. Her crew of 140 was lost.
Feb. 25, 1839	SEAGULL, Midshipman J. W. E. Reid, converted pilot boat with a crew of 16, sailed from Orange Harbor, Tierra del Fuego and was never seen again. She was serving as a tender to the Wilkes Exploring Expedition.
July 18, 1841	USS PEACOCK (18 guns), Lieutenant W. L. Hudson, was wrecked off Columbia River, Oregon. The crew was saved.
July 4, 1842	In the first test of an electrically-operated underwater "torpedo," the gunboat BOSER was sunk. The device was actually a mine invented by Samuel Colt.
Oct. 2, 1842	USS CONCORD (24 guns) was wrecked in Mozambique Channel. Three lives were lost.
March 14, 1843	USS GRAMPUS (10 guns) sighted off Charleston, N. C., this date and never seen again. It is believed that she was swamped in a heavy gale.
Aug. 25, 1843	USS MISSOURI, a steam frigate and the first U. S. Navy steam powered ship to cross the Atlantic arrived at Gibraltar. She was destroyed by fire the next day.
Feb. 28, 1844	Explosion of guns aboard the USS PRINCETON in the Potomac River in Washington, D. C. killed Secretary of State Abel Upshur and Secretary of the Navy, Thomas Gilmer.
Sept. 10, 1846	USS SHARK (12 guns) wrecked off Columbia River with no loss of life.
Nov. 8, 1846	USS SOMERS, Lieutenant Raphael Semmes, capsized off Vera Cruz, Mexico while in pursuit of a blockade runner. Three officers and 57 men were drowned.
March 21, 1847	USS HUNTER foundered and sunk in a gale of Vera Cruz. All hands were saved.
June 21, 1848	ON-KA-HY-E wrecked on Caicos Reef in the West Indies. The crew was saved.
	USS PETRITA wrecked off Alvarado. All the crew was saved.

Aug. 24, 1849	USS EDITH, 400 ton steamer grounded and wrecked at Pt. Conception, on the California coast. All the crew were saved.
Sept. 6, 1849	USS YORKTOWN wrecked on Cape Verdes Island. All the crew were saved.
Feb. 21, 1854	USS PORPOISE (10 guns) sailing in company with VINCENNES separated to move independently in the straits of Formosa. She was never seen again.
Sept. 29, 1854	USS ALBANY (22 guns), departed Aspinwall for New York with a crew of 193. She was never seen again.
Aug. 23, 1859	USS FENNIMORE COOPER was wrecked in the East Indies.
	USS FULTON was wrecked off Pensacola.
Sept. 18, 1860	USS LEVANT sailed from Hilo, Hawaii for Aspinwall Nicaragua. She was never seen again.
April 15, 1862	A boiler explosion in USS CHENANGO, in New York Harbor killed 25 men.
Aug. 23, 1862	USS ADIRONDACK, Captain Guert Gansevoort, ran on a reef outside Man of War Cay, Little Bahamas, and was abandoned.
Aug. 24, 1862	USS HENRY ANDREW, Lieutenant Arthur S. Gardner, was wrecked during a heavy gale south of Cape Henry, Virginia.
Dec. 31, 1862	USS MONITOR, Commander Bankhead, foundered and was lost off Cape Hatteras en route from Hampton Roads to Beaufort, North Carolina.
April 27, 1863	USS PREBLE, acting Master William F. Shankland, was accidentally destroyed by fire off Pensacola.
April 28, 1863	The tug LILY, Acting Master R. H. Timonds, was swept by tide into the bow of USS CHOCTAW, at anchor in the YAZOO River. She hit CHOCTAW's ram and sank.
April 18, 1863	USS SHEPHERD KNAPP, Acting Lieutenant Henry Etings, ran aground on a reef off Cape Haitien, Haiti and was stripped and abandoned.

June 24, 1863	USS SUMPTER, Acting Lieutenant Peter Hays, sank after colliding with the transport steamer GENERAL MEIGS near Hampton Roads during foul weather.
Aug. 29, 1863	The Confederate submarine H. L. Hunley, Lieutenant Payne, submerged in Charleston Harbor for the first time. She was moored to the steamer ETIWAN at the dock at Fort Johnson. When the steamer moved away from the dock unexpectedly, H. L. HUNLEY was drawn onto her side. She filled with water and sank rapidly, drowning five men. She was raised, refitted, and remanned.
Oct. 11, 1863	USS MADGIE, Acting Master Polleys, under tow by USS FAHKEE, Acting Ensign Francis R. Webb, sank in rough seas off Frying Pan Shoals, North Carolina.
Oct. 15, 1863	The Confederate submarine H. L. HUNLEY, under the command of the man for whom whe was named, sank in Charleston Harbor while diving under the Confederate receiving ship INDIAN CHIEF. Horace L. Hunley and the seven man crew were drowned. She was raised and equipped as a surface torpedo boat.
Dec. 6, 1863	USS WEEHAWKEN was swamped and sank in Charleston Harbor in an unusual tide after being overloaded with ammunition. Twenty-four officers and men were drowned.
Feb. 16, 1864	USS ST. CLAIR, Acting Lieutenant T. B. Gregory, collided with the Army steamer HOPE during a gale on the Mississippi River. HOPE sank.
March 6, 1864	USS PETERHOFF, Acting Lieutenant Thomas Pickering, collided with USS MONTICELLO and sank off New Inlet, North Carolina.
March 8, 1864	USS CONESTOGA, Lieutenant Commander Thomas O. Selfridge, was rammed by USS GENERAL PRICE, Lieutenant J. E. Richardson, below Grand Gulf, Mississippi. She sank in four minutes with the loss of two lives.
March 28, 1864	USS KINGFISHER, Acting Master John C. Dutch, ran aground and was wrecked in St. Helena Sound, South Carolina. She was abandoned.

June 12, 1864	USS LAVENDER, Acting Master John H. Gleason, struck Lookout Shoal, North Carolina in a severe squall and sank with a lost of nine crewmen. Survivors were rescued on June 15th by the Army steamer JOHN FARRON.
June 14, 1864	USS COURIER, Acting Master Samuel C. Gray, ran aground and was wrecked on Abaco Island, Bahamas. No casualties.
Jan. 1, 1865	USS SAN JACINTO was wrecked on No Name Key in the Bahamas.
Aug. 23, 1865	USS COMMODORE MACDONOUGH foundered while being towed from Port Royal, South Carolina to New York.
Oct. 20, 1865	USS NETTLE, a steam tug, was sunk in a collision with an ironclad.
Nov. 6, 1865	USS JACOB BELL sank while being towed to New York.
	USS ANNA was wrecked on the Florida Coast.
Jan. 4, 1866	USS NARCISSUS, armed tug driven ashore by a gale at Egmont Key, Florida. The entire crew of 32 was lost.
Dec. 16, 1866	USS NEW IRONSIDES burned while docked at League Island, New York.
June 19, 1867	USS SACRAMENTO was wrecked on a reef in Bay of Bengal. All hands were saved.
Nov. 18, 1867	USS MONONGAHELA, Commodore Bissell, was partially wrecked by a tidal wave off Frederickstadt Island off St. Croix. After being stranded in the midst of the town, she was washed back into the harbor by a second wave and run aground but was refloated. SUSQUEHANNA, also present, was not seriously damaged. USS DE SOTO was driven aground at St. Thomas.
July 9, 1868	USS SUWANEE was wrecked in Queen Charlotte Sound, enroute to Vancouver, B. C.

Aug. 13, 1868	USS FREDONIA was driven ashore and broken up, and USS WATCREE was badly damaged by a tidal wave at Arica, Peru. WATCREE was carried 1500 feet inland and 27 lives were lost.
Sept. 21, 1869	USS IDAHO was caught in a typhoon out of Yokohama. She was completely wrecked, but remained afloat long enough to reach Yokohama Harbor where she was abandoned.
Jan. 4, 1870	USS MARIA was sunk off Martha's Vineyard in a collision with the USS MIANTONOHAH.
Nov. 18 - Dec. 20, 1870	The gig USS SAGINAW got underway from Ocean Island with a party of 5 volunteers under the command of Lieutenant Talbot. She had gone aground, and all hands had gotten safely ashore. The refloated ship got underway for Hawaii to get aid for the remaining shipwrecked personnel. The gig arrived at Kauai, Hawaii on 20 Dec. completing a 1000 mile voyage. It was wrecked in the surf and only Coxswain William Halford survived.
December, 1870	USS CHATTANOOGA sank while docked at League Island, Navy Yard. Her sides were ripped open by harbor ice.
Oct. 24, 1872	USS POLARIS of the North Pole Expedition was abandoned after being crushed in ice near Etah, Greenland.
June 18, 1875	USS SARANAC, a side wheel steamer, was wrecked in Seymour Narrows, off Vancouver Island, Alaska.
Nov. 24, 1877	USS HURON, Commander Ryan, was wrecked in a gale off Nags Head, North Carolina, with a loss of 98 of the 132 men on board. The screw steamer USS ALERT was also wrecked this date.
Aug. 7, 1879	USS JEANETTE, Lieutenant G. W. Delong, sailed from San Francisco on a voyage of exploration in the Arctic. With a ships company of 32 officers and men she was frozen in the Arctic Ice Pack from September 1879 to June 12, 1881 when she was crushed and sank. The men took to the boats and crossed the ice pack 660 miles to the Lena Delta, Siberia where all but 10 perished from exposure and starvation.

June 6, 1881	USS RODGERS, Lieutenant Commander Berry, sailed in search of the JEANNETTE. She was destroyed by fire in St. Lawarence Bay, Nov. 30, 1881.
Feb. 18, 1883	USS ASHUELOT grounded on the Lamrock Rocks near the mouth of the Swatow River, China. Eleven of the crew were drowned.
July 23, 1883	USS PROTEUS was crushed in the Aretic Ice Pack.
March 15-16, 1889	A flotilla of American, German and British warships was present at Apia, Samoa protecting national interests during a dispute over sovereignty. When a typhoon struck, the new, powerful British steamer was able to get to sea safely. However, the older underpowered American ships TRENTON, VARDALIA, and NIPSIC were driven ashore as were the three German ships. TRENTON and VERDALIA were totally wrecked and 53 American lives were lost. The Germans suffered 91 casualties. Loss of life would have been greater except for the help of the natives and the unusual use of American seamen as a "human sail". The men manned the yards on the NIPSIC, clasping hands, providing a turning force to prevent a collision with a grounded ship.
Feb., 1891	USS DESPATCH, dispatch boat, ran aground on Assateague Shoal off the Maryland Coast.
Feb. 2, 1894	USS KEARSARGE was wrecked by striking Roncador Reef in the West Indies. All hands were rescued eight days later by the City of Peru. Popular demand resulted in the name KEARSARGE being given to a battleship, the only U. S. battleship not named for a state.
Feb. 15, 1898	USS MAINE, Captain C. D. Sigsbee, sank in Havana Harbor, after an explosion on board. Of 358 officers and men on board, 250 were killed. The loss of MAINE was the immediate cause of the Spanish American War. The cause of the explosion was never positively established, even after divers examined the hulk at the conclusion of the war. Fifty-nine crewmen were buried at Arlington National Cemetery in sight of the mainmast, erected as a monument. Her foremast was erected at the U. S. Naval Academy.
Nov. 2, 1899	USS CHARLESTON, Captain C. W. Pigman, was wrecked on a reef near Kaminguin Island, P. I.

Dec. 13, 1900	USS YOSEMITE was wrecked at Apra Harbor, Guam in a typhoon. Five men were killed.
June 5, 1901	The ammunition magazines at Marc Island (Calif.) Navy Yard exploded, destroying the magazines. There were no personnel casualties.
July 21, 1905	USS BENNINGTON was severely damaged by a boiler explosion while at anchor at San Diego, California. The ship sank with a loss of 65 lives. Although raised, BENNINGTON was never returned to service.
July 15, 1907	Ten men were killed in an explosion in a gun turret on board the USS GEORGIA.
1909	On an unspecified date during the year, the tug NEGINSCOT capsized off Cape Ann.
Sept. 25, 1909	USS YANKEE struck Spindle Rock off the Massachusetts coast and sank. She was raised but sank again on December 4th.
March 15, 1910	USS NINA, tug, sailed from Norfolk, Virginia and was never seen or heard from again.
Aug. 9, 1910	USS MARCULLUS 9 a collier, was sunk in a collision off the Carolina coast by the steamer ROSERIE di CREGORIA.
March 16, 1911	USS MAINE was raised in Havana Harbor, towed to sea, and sank.
April 15, 1912	The British White Star passenger liner SS TITANIC sank in the North Atlantic after hitting an iceberg; 1,595 lives were lost. The scout cruisers, USS SALEM and USS CHESTER sailed from President Roads, Massachusetts to assist in rescue operations. As a result of this disaster, the International Ice Patrol, still in operation, was established on May 19, 1912.
July 31, 1912	The Navy's first attempt to launch an airplane was made at Annapolis, Md. by Lieutenatn T. G. Ellyson in the A-1. The aircraft was not secured to the catapult and was thrown into the water. The pilot was not injured.

July 20, 1913	Ensign W. D. Billingsley, piloting the B-2 at 1,000 feet over water near Annapolis was thrown from the plane and fell to his death - the first fatality of Naval Aviation. Lieutenant J. H. Towers fell with the plane into the water and was seriously injured.
July 1, 1914	Prohibition was proclaimed for all ships and stations of the Navy by Secretary of the Navy, Josephus Daniels. Since this time the Navy has been "dry".
March 25, 1915	The submarine F-4 sank off Honolulu, Hawaii with the loss of 21 lives. This was the first submarine sinking in U. S. Navy History.
Jan. 15, 1916	The submarine, USS E-2 exploded at the New York Navy Yard. The explosion was caused by escaping gases during an overhaul. The interior of the ship was severely damaged; four men were killed.
July 14, 1916	USS HECTOR, a collier, was wrecked in Dominican waters.
Aug. 29, 1916	USS MEMPHIS was driven aground at Santo Domingo by heavy waves. The ship was wrecked and 33 men were killed.
Jan. 13, 1917	USS MILWAUKEE ran aground and was a total wreck.
July 7, 1917	USS SAXIS was grounded at West Point, Virginia. She was lost with no casualties.
Oct. 1, 1917	USS MOHAWK sank while on patrol off Ambrose Lightship; no personnel casualties.
Oct. 30, 1917	A packet boat from the battleship MICHIGAN foundered in Hampton Roads, Virginia. 12 men were drowned.
Nov. 4, 1917	USS EMPRESS sprang a leak and sank with no casualties.
Nov. 19, 1917	USS CHAUNCEY, a destroyer, was sunk in a collision with SS ROSE offthe coast of England; 21 lives were lost.
Dec. 9, 1917	The patrol craft USS WASHINGTON sank in Ambrose Channel with no casualties.
Dec. 17, 1917	The submarine USS F-1 was rammed and sunk by the submarine USS F-3 off San Pedro, California; 19 lives were lost.

Dec. 22, 1917	USS Submarine Chaser 117 burned off Fort Monroe Lighthouse, Virginia with no personnel casualties.
Jan. 12, 1918	USS P. K. BAUMAN, a patrol craft, struck a rock and sank off the French Coast; no personnel casualties.
Jan. 25, 1918	USS GUINEVERE struck a rock and sank near Lorient, France; no personnel casualties.
Jan. 26, 1918	USS CHEROKEE foundered off Fenwick Island Lightship; 28 lives were lost.
Feb. 26, 1918	USS MARINER foundered and sank in the Atlantic; no personnel casualties.
March 4, 1918	USS CYCLOPS sailed from Barbadoes, British West Indies with 280 men on board. She was never seen or heard from again. CYCLOPS was a modern collier carrying a cargo of ore. Her disappearance is one of the continuing mysteries of the sea.
March 19, 1918	The destroyer USS MANLEY collided with the HMS MONTAGUE off Ireland with a loss of 34 lives.
April 11, 1918	USS Mary B. Garner ran aground and was wrecked on Prime Hook Beach, Delaware; one life lost.
May 20, 1918	USS ANNIE R. GALLUP was wrecked with no casualties.
May 22, 1918	USS WAKIVA II was sunk in a collision with the SS WABASH in the Bay of Biscay with a loss of two lives.
June 5, 1918	USS SUBMARINE CHASER 132 was sunk in a collision with USS TACOMA off Barnegat Light. There were no casualties.
June 21, 1918	USS SCHURZ was sunk in a collision with the SS FLORIDA off Cape Lookout, Florida with the loss of one man.
July 10, 1918	USS OSTERDIJK was sunk in a collision with SS SAN JACINTO in the Atlantic; no personnel casualties.
Aug. 4, 1918	USS SUBMARINE CHASER 187 was sunk in a collision with the SS CAPTO off the coast of Virginia; no personnel casualties.

Aug. 21, 1918	USS MONTAUK was lost in a gale off Cumberland Island, Georgia; nine lives were lost.
Oct. 1, 1918	USS SUBMARINE CHASER 60 was sunk in a collision with the tanker F. M. WELLER near Ambrose lightship; two men were killed.
Oct. 4, 1918	USS GEORGE G. HENRY collided with USS HERMAN FRASCH off Nova Scotia; 23 lives lost.
Oct. 5, 1918	USS MARY ALICE was sunk in a collision with the submarine USS O-13 in Long Island Sound; no personnel casualties.
Oct. 7, 1918	USS WEST GATE was sunk in a collision with the USS AMERICAN off Nova Scotia with a loss of seven lives.
Oct. 9, 1918	The destroyer USS SHAW was rammed by the HMS AQUITANIA off Portland, England. 12 lives were lost.
	USS SUBMARINE CHASER 219 exploded and sank en route to the Azores from Bermuda; 4 lives were lost.
Oct. 15, 1918	USS AMERICA sank at her dock at Hoboken, New Jersey with the loss of six men and a million dollar cargo. She was raised, refitted, and returned to service.
Oct. 28, 1918	USS TARANTULA was sunk in a collision with the merchantman SS FRISIA off Fire Island Light Ships; no personnel casualties.
Nov. 6, 1918	USS LAKE DAMITA ran aground and sank off Brest, France; no personnel casualties.
Nov. 15, 1918	USS ELIZABETH was wrecked in the mouth of the Brazes River, Texas, with the loss of two lives.
Nov. 26, 1918	USS BONITA sank in Boston Harbor after being rammed by the schooner RUSSELL; no personnel casualties.
Dec. 9, 1918	Six men were killed and 30 injured in a coal dust explosion on board USS BROOKLYN.
Dec. 11, 1918	USS LAKE BLOOMINGTON ran aground and sank in the mouth of the Gironde River, France; no personnel casualties.

Dec. 28, 1918	USS TENADORES ran aground and was totally wrecked 10 miles from Brest, France; no casualties.
Dec. 30, 1918	USS KATHERINE W. CULLEN sank while in tow by the USS HERON, about 15 miles from the Boston Light Vessel; no personnel casualties.
Jan. 29, 1919	USS PICVE grounded and sank in the Dover Strait; no personnel casualties.
April 28, 1919	USS W. T. JAMES and USS GYPSUM QUEEN sank after an explosion in GYPSUM QUEEN off Armen Light, France. GYPSUM QUEEN suffered 18 casualties.
May 2, 1919	USS SUBMARINE CHASER 58 burned after gasoline explosion at Charleston, South Carolina; no personnel casualties.
May 5, 1919	USS SUBMARINE CHASER 343 sank after an explosion and fire at His Majesty's Dockyard, Ireland Island, Bermuda.
July 17, 1919	USS NAY ran aground and sank off Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.
July 30, 1919	The submarine USS G-3 sank off New London, Connecticut; three lives were lost.
Sept. 10, 1919	The patrol craft USS MARY POPE was wrecked at sea and sank with no casualties.
	The patrol craft USS KATHERINE K. was wrecked near Key West, Florida with no casualties.
March 9, 1920	USS SUBMARINE CHASER 282 sank in the Pacific with no casualties.
March 24, 1920	USS H-1, a submarine, which had run aground, sank during salvage operations off Margarita Island, Baja, California; four lives were lost.
Sept. 1, 1920	The submarine USS S-5 was sunk accidentally off the mouth of the Delaware Bay; there were no casualties.
Feb. 26, 1921	USS WOOLSEY a destroyer, was sunk in a collision with the SS STEEL INVENTOR off Panama; 16 lives were lost.

March 23, 1921	The USS CONESTOGA, a fleet tug, with a crew of 43 sailed from San Francisco to Samoa and was never seen again.
Aug. 24, 1921	The British dirigible R-38, constructed for the U. S. Navy exploded over Hull, England. Seventeen Navy personnel were killed.
Sept. 26, 1921	The submarine, USS R-6 sank off San Pedro, California; two lives were lost.
Dec. 7, 1921	The submarine USS S-48 sank off Bridgeport, Connecticut during a practice dive. The crew of 43 was saved after one escaped through a torpedo tube to get help.
Dec. 16, 1921	The destroyer USS GRAHAM was destroyed in a collision.
May 22, 1922	USS EAGLE 17 was wrecked between Amagansett and Easthampton off Long Island, New York.
June 5, 1923	The minesweeper USS CARDINAL was wrecked off Cherikof, Alaska.
July 27, 1923	USS GRANITE STATE, old frigate, burned and sank off Massachusetts.
Aug. 21, 1923	USS GOPHER, a tender, was sunk.
Sept. 8, 1923	The Point Honda, California disaster. Seven destroyers ran aground on the California coast in a heavy fog as a result of a navigational error. USS DELPHY, S. P. LEE, FULLER, CHAUNCEY, WOODBURY, NICHOLAS, and YOUNG were complete losses. Twenty-two men were killed; a very small number - which was considered the result of outstanding training and discipline.
Oct. 6, 1923	USS SUBMARINE CHASER 340 was destroyed by fire.
Sept. 25, 1924	The submarine USS S-51 sank after being rammed by the SS CITY OF ROME off Black Island. There were 37 lives lost. S-51 was raised on July 5, 1925 and was towed to the Brooklyn Navy Yard.

Sept. 3, 1925	USS SHENANDOAH, a dirigible, was lost in a severe storm over Ohio. The after section crashed, but the forward section free ballooned for an hour, landing safely 12 miles away with seven men aboard. There were 14 casualties, including the Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Commander Zachary Lansdowne; 29 survived.
Dec. 15, 1925	The minesweeper USS CURLEW was wrecked when she ran aground off Panama.
Dec. 17, 1927	The submarine USS S-4 was rammed while submerged off Provincetown, Massachusetts by the Coast Guard destroyer POULDING. Five officers and 34 enlisted men died when the ship sank.
Feb. 27, 1928	Commander T. C. Ellyson, the Navy's first aviator was killed in an air crash on a night flight from Norfolk, Va. to Annapolis, Md.
Apr. 4, 1933	USS AKRON, a dirigible, was lost at sea in a storm. Seventy-three lives were lost, including Admiral William Moffett, Chief of the Bureau of Aeronautics, of Barnegal Light New Jersey.
Feb. 12, 1935	The dirigible MACON crashed off Point Sur, California with a loss of two lives while operating with the Pacific Fleet.
June 26, 1937	The minesweeper USS SANDERLING sank.
May 23, 1939	USS SQUALAS, a submarine, sank on a practice dive off Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Fifty-nine of her crew were rescued by diving bell, 26 were cited. SQUALAS was later raised, repaired and renamed SAILFISH. She served in World War II with great success.
Feb. 9, 1942	USS LAFAYETTE, the former French liner NORMANDIE, burned at her pier at New York while undergoing conversion.
Feb. 18, 1942	The destroyer USS TRUXTON and General Stores Issue Ship, USS POLLUX were sunk in a heavy storm in Placentia Bay, Newfoundland; 204 lives were lost.

June 3, 1942	The minesweeper USS BUNTING was sunk in a collision in San Francisco Bay.
June 19, 1942	The submarine USS S-27 ran aground on Amchitka in the Aleutian Islands and was abandoned.
June 30, 1942	The minesweeper USS HORNBILL was sunk in a collision in San Francisco Bay.
Aug. 14, 1942	The submarine USS S-39 struck a submerged reef off Rossel Island. She had to be abandoned on Aug. 16th.
Aug. 22, 1942	USS INGRAHAM, a destroyer was sunk in a collision with the fleet oiler, USS CHEMUNG off Nova Scotia. CHEMUNG was damaged.
	USS BUCK was damaged in a collision with a merchantman off Nova Scotia.
Sept. 9, 1942	The weather ship MUSKEGET disappeared in the Atlantic and was never located; 120 lives were lost.
Sept. 30, 1942	The heavy cruiser USS SAN FRANCISCO collided with the USS BREESE in the New Hebrides area. Both were damaged.
Oct. 21, 1942	The destroyer, USS GRAYSON was damaged in a collision.
Dec. 5, 1942	USS GREBE, an Ocean Tug (old), ran aground and sank south of the Fiji Islands.
Dec. 17, 1942	The Gunboat, USCG NATSEK disappeared in Belle Isle Straits, Newfoundland; she probably foundered.
Dec. 24, 1942	The Navy transports USS NIGHTINGALE and USS THURSTON were damaged in a collision off North Africa.
Jan. 12, 1943	The destroyer USS WORDEN was sunk after grounding off Anchitka.
	PT-28 sank after grounding off Cape Breton, Nova Scotia.

Jan. 21, 1943	USS SC-709 sank after grounding off Cape Breton, Nova Scotia.
Feb. 20, 1943	Minesweeper USS YMS-133 foundered in Coos Bay, Oregon.
Mar. 2, 1943	The USS SC-1024, a submarine chaser, was sunk in a collision off North Carolina.
May 10, 1943	The destroyer USS MAC DONOUGH and the destroyer minesweeper SICARD were damaged in a collision in the Aleutian Island area.
June 11, 1943	PT-22 damaged in a storm was run aground and abandoned near Adak, Aleutian Islands.
June 17, 1943	The submarine chaser USS SC-740 ran aground and sank northeast of Australia.
	LST-6 and LST-326 were damaged in a collision off North Africa.
June 18, 1943	The USS RONAKI ran aground and sank on the east coast of Australia.
Aug. 23, 1943	USS CROW, a minesweeper was sunk by an erratic torpedo in Puget Sound, Washington.
Nov. 19, 1943	USS SC-1067 foundered off Attu, Aleutian Islands.
Nov. 29, 1943	The destroyer USS PERKINS was sunk in a collision with the Australian transport, HMAS WESTRALIA off eastern New Guinea.
Jan. 3, 1944	The destroyer USS TURNER sank after an internal explosion in Ambrose Channel, New York, with the loss of 100 men.
Jan. 6, 1944	The Gunboat USS ST. AUGUSTINE was sunk in a collision off North Carolina.
Jan. 20, 1944	LST-228 sank after grounding off the Azores Islands.
Feb. 22, 1944	PT-200 sank off Long Island, New York after striking a submerged object.
Feb. 26, 1944	LST-349 sank after grounding off Italy.

Apr. 12, 1944	The rescue tug, ATR-98 was sunk in a collision in the Azores area.
June 29, 1944	The coastal minesweeper USS VALOR sank after a collision off Newport, R. I.
July 4, 1944	The submarine, USS S-28 sank off the Hawaiian Islands during a practice dive with the loss of all hands.
Sept. 12, 1944	The high speed transport USS NOA and the destroyer USS FULLAM collided off the Palau Islands; NOA sank and FULLAM was damaged.
Sept. 13, 1944	The destroyer, USS WARRINGTON sank off the Bahamas in a hurricane.
Sept. 14, 1944	The coast guard cutters BEDLOE and JACKSON were sunk off Cape Hatteras and Lightship 73 was sunk off Martha's Vineyard and the auxilliary ship 17 was sunk off North Carolina in an Atlantic Storm.
Oct. 1, 1944	The destroyer USS FORREST was damaged in a collision off southern France.
Oct. 2, 1944	The Landing Ships Tank (LST's) 129, 278, and 611 were damaged in a severe storm in the Palau Islands.
Nov. 10, 1944	The ammunition ship USS MOUNT HOOD sank after her cargo exploded at Manus in the Admiralty Islands.
Dec. 18, 1944	A typhoon off the east coast of the Philippine Islands sank the destroyers USS HULL, SPENCE, and MONAGHAN and damaged the following ships:

Light carriers: USS COWPENS, MONTEREY, CABOT, and SAN JACINTO.

Escort carriers: USS ALTAMAHA, NEHENTA BAY, CAPE ESPERANCE, KWAJALEIN.

The light cruiser USS MIAMI.

Destroyers: ALYWIN, BENHAM, BUCHANAN, DEWY, DYSON, HICKOX, MADDOX.

Dec. 18, 1944 (Cont'd)	Destroyer escorts: USS MELVIN R. NAWAN, TABBERER, and WATTERMAN
	The fleet oiler NATAHALA
	The fleet tug USS JICARILLA
	The typhoon cost the Navy 765 lives.
Jan. 3, 1945	The escort carrier USS SARGENT BAY and the destroyer escort KELLER collided and were damaged in the Philippines.
Jan. 4, 1945	The destroyer USS BELL was damaged in a collision off Luzon.
Jan. 10, 1945	The auxilliary minesweeper USS YMS-14 was sunk in a collision in Boston Harbor.
Jan. 29, 1945	The cargo ship USS SERPENS sank after an explosion while anchored at Guadacanal. There were 253 men killed.
Feb. 11, 1945	The fleet tug USS TAKELMA was damaged in a collision in the Philippines.
Feb. 25, 1945	The destroyer USS HARRISON was damaged in a severe storm south of Honshu, Japan.
Mar. 8, 1945	The self-propelled lighter, YF-926, sank en route from California to Pearl Harbor.
June 5, 1945	A typhoon in the Okinawa area did heavy damage to U. S. Naval ships in the area. 36 ships were damaged including four battleships, eight carriers, seven cruisers, and several destroyers and large support ships.
July 26, 1945	USS LOWRY, a destroyer, was damaged by an explosion in the Philippines.
Oct. 9, 1945	The patrol craft PC-590 floundered and broke in two in a storm off Okinawa.
Oct. 11, 1945	A typhoon struck Okinawa killing 43 personnel, 49 were injured, and 30 declared missing.

Aug. 26, 1949	The submarine USS COCHINO sank after an internal fire and explosion while on a training cruise in the Arctic. Her crew was rescued.
April 5, 1950	The world's largest flying boat, the Marshall Mars, crash landed off Hawaii. She exploded and sank, but her crew was rescued.
Aug. 25, 1950	The Navy hospital ship, USS BENEVOLENCE collided with the SS MARY LUCKENBACH while on a trial run after being taken out of mothballs for service in the Korean War. The ship sank outside the Golden Gate with a loss of 18 lives.
March 2, 1952	A landing craft (LCPL) foundered off Yongpyond-do, Korea with a loss of all hands. There were American, Korean, and English officers and men on board.
April 26, 1952	The destroyer, USS HOBSON was sunk in a collision with the aircraft carrier, USS WASP during training maneuvers in the Atlantic. 176 men on board HOBSON were killed.
Aug. 6, 1952	The explosion of a Panther Jet aircraft (F9F) on the flight deck of the aircraft carrier, USS BOXER, in the operating area off Korea, caused a fire which ignited gasoline and ammunition. Nine men died of smoke and burns. Helicopters and destroyers of the Task Force 77 rescued 63 survivors from the sea. The fire was under control in a few hours and the ship was still operational, although 12 aircraft and some aviation materials were damaged by the fire.
Sept. 11, 1952	Six aircraft (F9F-4s) crashed into a mountain during an instrument landing in the vicinity of airfield K-2 in Korea. All the pilots were killed.
Nov. 30, 1952	The fleet oiler USS ASHTUBULA was damaged by a gasoline explosion while at Sasebo, Japan. One man was killed and three were injured.
Jan. 28, 1953	A privateer patrol plane with a crew of nine navymen on board, disappeared enroute from Alameda, California to Whidby Island, Washington.

Feb. 19, 1953	The destroyers USS PRICHETT and USS CUSHING collided while operating with Task Force 77 off Korea. Both ships required dry docking in Sasebo, Japan for repairs.
Mar. 6, 1953	A bomb dropped from an F4U aircraft landing aboard the aircraft carrier USS ORISKANY exploded on number three elevator platform killing two men and wounding thirteen others.
April 27, 1953	An explosion on board the aircraft carrier USS BENNINGTON off Guantanamo, Cuba killed 11 men and injured 4.
July 18, 1953	A Marine transport aircraft crashed near Milton, Florida. Forty-four NROTC Midshipmen and crew members perished. Two crewmen survived.
Oct. 16, 1953	The aircraft carrier, USS LEYTE was damaged by a fire and explosion in Boston Harbor; thirty-seven men were killed.
May 26, 1954	An explosion and fire on board USS BENNINGTON, an aircraft carrier, off Newport, R. I. caused 103 deaths and 117 serious injuries.
Sept. 27, 1955	A P2V Neptune patrol plane from Early Warning Squadron Four was lost with eleven crew members while tracking Hurricane Janet over the Caribbean Sea.
Jan. 5, 1956	The destroyer, USS BASILONE grounded off Cape Henry. She was freed by the tug USS ATAKAPA on Jan. 11 and towed to the Naval Shipyard at Portsmouth, Virginia.
Sept. 21, 1956	An F-11-F Tiger jet aircraft shot itself down while conducting firing tests over eastern Long Island, New York. The plane ran into 20mm projectiles which it had fired seconds before at a higher altitude.
May 28, 1958	The submarine USS STICKLEBACK was sunk in a collision with the destroyer USS SILVERSTEIN off Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. There was no loss of life.
Aug. 22, 1958	USS PRETICE, a minesweeper, was sunk after running aground off Shikoku, Japan.

Feb. 25, 1960	A Navy four engine transport aircraft operating in support of the U. S. Navy Band on a good-will tour of South America, collided with a Brazilian commercial airliner over Rio De Janeiro. Thirty-five naval personnel were killed, including 19 members of the Navy Band. There were three survivors.
March 19, 1960	The destroyer USS DARBY, collided with the Swedish merchantman SOYA in the Atlantic off Cape Henry, Virginia. Two men were killed.
July 19, 1960	The destroyers, USS COLLETT and USS AMMEN collided in a fog off Huntington Beach, California. COLLETT required a new bow and AMMEN was scrapped.
Aug. 12, 1960	The minesweeper, USS EXULTANT was damaged by an engineroom fire off the Georgia coast. Five men were killed.
Dec. 19, 1960	A fire on the CONSTELLATION, an aircraft carrier under construction in the Brooklyn Navy Yard killed 50 persons and injured 150. It caused $75,000,000 worth of damage to the ship.
March 25, 1961	USS INTREPID, an aircraft carrier, was damaged by a boiler explosion at sea; 11 men were injured.
Sept. 26, 1961	The U. S. Naval Ship POTOMAC was damaged by fire and explosion at Morehead City, North Carolina.
May 4, 1962	Commander Malcom Ross and Lieutenant Commander Victor Prather, a Navy medical officer, ascended to a height of 113,500 feet, establishing a world's record for manned balloons. The balloon was launched from the aircraft carrier USS ANTIETAM in the Gulf of Mexico. The flight lasted nine hours. Medical and scientific experiments were conducted. Dr. Prather was drowned during the helicopter retrieval from the sea after completion of the flight.
Nov. 11, 1962	Installations on the Island of Guam were severely damaged by Typhoon Karen. Hundreds were injured and 2 people were killed.

April 10, 1963	The nuclear submarine USS THRESHER sank while conducting test dives 220 miles east of Cape Cod. Her entire crew of 112 and 17 civilians were lost.
April 1, 1964	The aircraft carrier USS RANDOLPH was damaged when the number three elevator dropped loose from its mountings and fell overboard. Five men and one aircraft were dropped into the Atlantic Ocean. Three of the men were rescued by the USS HOLDER a destroyer escort.
May 6, 1964	The destroyer USS DECATUR was seriously damaged in a collision with the aircraft carrier, USS LAKE CHAMPLAIN off Cape Henry, Virginia. Although seriously damaged, none of her crew was injured seriously.
June 3, 1964	The aircraft carrier USS LAKE CHAMPLAIN was damaged in a collision with the Norwegian merchant ship SKAWAAG in the Chesapeake Bay off Annapolis, Maryland.
June 16, 1955	The destroyer escort HARTLEY collided with the Norwegian merchant ship, BLUE MASTER off the Virginia Capes. Northeast winds drove the Navy ship, disabled in the collision, aground 500 yards off the coast. She was later refloated and repaired.

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire used by the author in obtaining personal observations from military public information officers, newsmen, civilian public relations practitioners, and government information specialists.

PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING

1. Years Public Information Experience - _____.

2. In your recollection, which peacetime naval disaster was best handled from a public information point of view?

   A. Brief description of the disaster -

   B. Two specific reasons why it was the best -

      (1)

      (2)

3. In your recollection, which peacetime naval disaster was the worst from a public information point of view?

   A. Brief description of the disaster -

   B. Two specific reasons why it was the worst -

      (1)

      (2)

4. In designing a Public Information Disaster Plan, for a command, a particular operation, or special event, what five things do you consider most important to consider, ie., to plan for?

   A.
   B.
   C.
   D.
   E.

5. In designing a Public Information "Disaster Kit", ie., a prepared packet, desk drawer, or briefcase containing time-saving materials for use in a disaster situation; what five items would you consider essential to include?

   A.
   B.
   C.
   D.
   E.

6. In a peacetime naval disaster situation, what three DO's and DON'T's would you list as guidance for the Public Information Officer on the scene?

DO A.
B.
C.

DON'T
A.
B.
C.

7. Each disaster situation is unique. However, there are certain lessons learned from each which can be applied to those disasters which will unfortunately occur in the future. From your personal experiences, what particular areas do you consider worthy of special attention? Critical times? Helpful Hints. Danger areas?

APPENDIX C

Manual prepared by the Texas Gas Transmission Corporation entitled, "Meet The Press" and distributed to employees. Also included is the letter which accompanied the manual when it was distributed to employees.

TEXAS GAS
TRANSMISSION CORPORATION

P.O. BOX 1160 • OWENSBORO, KENTUCKY 42301

The press is a powerful medium. It is also a reliable and responsible one.

Most of us would rather be without bacon and eggs at breakfast than to be without our morning newspaper. Hunched over our tables in quiet concentration, we learn how the Yankees outslugged the Reds in a World Series championship game. Or, if the breakfast hour finds us in a more scholarly mood, we can read all the information available to a private citizen about hydrogen bomb tests and summit conferences.

The point is, we depend on our newspaper. From its pages we learn what movies to see and which ones to pass up, what to buy and where to buy it, and quite often, whom we should like and whom we should dislike.

That is why our company is vitally interested in its relations with the press. A news story favorable to Texas Gas can be worth even more than an advertisement prepared by our own people. An unfavorable news account, on the other hand, can cost our company dearly through the loss of good will.

Over the years, we have built a good reputation with the press. Much of the credit belongs to you and to the competent manner in which you are conducting the operations under your control.

But a serious emergency, if not handled correctly, can destroy a good reputation. Our handling of press relations during these crucial moments could very well determine what the general public will think of our company for years to come.

-more-

At the scene of an emergency, you may be the only qualified person to talk with representatives of the press. At such a time, the reputation and good will of our company rests in your hands alone.

"Meet the Press" is designed to assist you by showing how the presentation of clear, unbiased facts will help prevent "sensational" articles and at the same time build a good reputation with the press and public.

Sincerely,

A. L. Roberts
Senior Vice President

MEET THE PRESS

MEET THE PRESS

A manual to assist employees in their contact with the press in the event of an accident or emergency.

Texas Gas Transmission Corporation

MEET THE PRESS

Major accidents, whether caused by acts of God, sabotage, or failure of equipment, can happen in our industry as well as in any other.

Suppose you are the ranking supervisor on duty when something goes wrong.

You'd be busy -- plenty busy! Quick decisions would have to be made. People gathered at the scene must be kept safely out of the way. There might be need for first aid treatment.

In the midst of all this, a tall, slender fellow with a camera in his hand might amble up to you and say:

"I'm a newspaper reporter. Can you give me some idea of what happened here?"

What are you going to say to him? Does the company approve of your giving out details? Have you got time to talk with a newspaperman?

THE REPORTER'S VIEWPOINT

Give the newsman a fair shake, and look at the situation from his point of view.

A reporter, whether he is from a newspaper, or a broadcasting or television station, has come to report the facts, not to pass judgment on our company. His finished news story will be checked and rechecked for accuracy and impartiality. But to write an accurate story, the

reporter must be told exactly what happened and must have background information to use in his story.

Supervisors at the scene of an emergency should keep in mind that the newspaper is going to get the story one way or another. If the reporter can't get information by going through the front door, he'll be forced through the back door. That is, he will have to rely on the colorful, but usually inaccurate, stories of bystanders. Your own report of the accident, quite naturally, would be more agreeable to the company than that of an excitable grandmother who saw the whole thing through her kitchen window.

The reporter, just like all of us, has a job to do. If he is given the courteous cooperation of company officials, there is no reason why his finished product should not be a fair and impartial report.

But if the reporter is denied a factual account and background of the emergency and is forced to rely on the exciting but unknowing accounts of passers-by, the relationship of our company to the reading public (which includes nearly everybody) can be seriously damaged.

WHAT THE REPORTER WANTS

Everyone studied the five W's in grade school -- who, what, when, where, why.

Some day, at the scene of a major accident, you may have a chance to put that knowledge to practical use. You will be able to make a

LIKE, MAN.... WHAT A BLAST! FILL ME IN, DAD! DETAILS IS WHAT I NEED! ZOT! WHAT A STORY!
BLAST? WHAT BLAST? SON, WE JUST HAD A LIL' OL' LINE BREAK.
PRESS

reporter's job easier for him by being familiar with the basic questions he must ask before writing any news story. And by having the answers to the basic questions ready as soon as humanly possible, you will be building a bridge of understanding between your company and the press that will be hard to erase in the future.

Just to refresh your memory, the five W's are:

WHAT: Nature of accident; physical damage to pipeline, compressor station, and other company property and equipment; physical damage to the property of others and owners' names and addresses; how service will be affected by the emergency; what repairs will be made and how long they will take to complete.

WHO: Nature and extent of injuries; names, ages, addresses, occupations of any injured; what injured were doing at accident scene; disposition of injured; if removed to hospital, what hospital and where; name of doctor who treated injured.

WHEN: Time of accident

WHERE: Type of area where emergency occurred; approximate distances to nearest landmarks or towns; type of terrain.

WHY: Cause of accident, if known.

Chaos will result if every pipeline crew member at the emergency scene tries to give an account of the accident to newsmen.

Ten or 20 voices clamoring for a reporter's attention will only muddle his understanding, not help it. Our company does not believe in keeping secrets -- you know that already. But to avoid confusion, there must be a channel of responsibility in giving out information to the press.

Imagine a large pie! Each employee at the site of the accident, let us say, has one piece of the pie -- one piece of information about the accident. Remember that his limited viewpoint makes it nearly impossible for him to have all the facts. But a reporter "hungry" for the whole pie cannot be filled on just a few pieces of it. Therefore, we must appoint someone to combine all the separate pieces of pie, that is, information, and allow him to present it in its complete form to the press. Only by proceeding in such an orderly manner can we be sure of giving a factual and accurate account of the situation to newsmen.

Those authorized to represent the company in dealing with the press are:

1. The Ranking Supervisor at the Emergency Site. This is the compressor station manager, pipeline crew foreman or district pipeline manager in the field, or any other supervisor who is initially in charge at the emergency scene. Press relations is his job until the arrival of a division manager or division superintendent.

MY FRIEND OF THE FOURTH ESTATE, THE CAUSE IS UNDETERMINED AT THIS TIME.... BUT WAIT A FEW MINUTES AND THE DIVISION MANAGER WILL SOON HAVE THE FACTS AND SOME BACKGROUND MATERIAL FOR YOU.
PRESS

2. Division Manager or Division Superintendent. He is authorized to deal with the press as soon as he arrives at the site or whenever he has confirmed information from the scene of the accident which will enable him to give an accurate account to newsmen.

3. Department Head or Representative of Management. His job is to take over press relations when he arrives at the scene and to clarify the account by telling what effect the emergency will have on the general system. He may also provide background material for newsmen.

4. Representative of the Public Relations Department. He acts as a liaison officer between representatives of the company and the press. If no contact with the press has been made by the time he takes over, all information to be issued by any other company official should first be channeled through the public relations representative. Additionally, the operating head of the department involved in the emergency must keep the public relations department fully informed at all times about the situation at the emergency site. This is for the benefit of newspapermen who will be calling directly to Owensboro for information.

NEVER should an unauthorized employee attempt to deal with the press. Members of pipeline and compressor station crews, dispatchers, and others who are in charge of associated company facilities involved in handling the emergency should NOT comment on the situation to the press.

In the event a dispatching office is contacted by the local newspaper for details of an emergency, the dispatcher on duty should follow one

I SAY.....KEEP CALM! EVERYTHING WILL BE JUS' FINE.
BACKGROUND MATERIAL
DIVISION MANAGER

of two courses:

1. Refer the reporter to the public relations department at Owensboro.

2. Tell the reporter that the information desired will be obtained from official sources and call the public relations department for an official statement on the matter. Then call the reporter back. Under no circumstances should information be released to the press based on conversation overheard on the company leased line or radio.

BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU SAY

The reporter will not be hesitant to quote directly anything you say at the site of the emergency.

For this reason, it is important that you be extremely cautious in your terminology when dealing with the press. Your comments should give only the facts of the matter and avoid any kind of exaggeration.

An expression like "the damn thing just blew sky high" might wind up as an exact quote in the story the reporter will write.

COURTESY IS IMPORTANT

The company spokesman will make friends for Texas Gas by being courteous to members of the press when they arrive at the scene of an emergency.

CALM DOWN, BOYS! EVERYBODY RELAX! I AM HERE! I'LL TAKE OVER NOW!
YE GODS! WHAT HAPPENED?
PUBLIC RELATIONS DEPARTMENT

UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES should an employee say to a reporter:

"I'm not allowed to talk."

"I can't tell you anything."

"I don't have time to talk to you."

If the employee cannot break away from what he is doing to take the reporter to the authorized spokesman at the scene of an emergency, he should send someone with him to be sure that he reaches the proper person and does not venture into a danger area.

Employees who are stationed around an emergency area to prevent spectators from entering danger areas should be courteous at all times. Those employees may be the only direct contact the spectators will ever have with Texas Gas, and that contact should be remembered as a courteous one.

All employees, regardless of position, should treat reporters with respect, and escort them to the ranking supervisor or public relations representative immediately upon the newsman's arrival at the scene.

Never should a reporter or photographer be permitted to enter a danger zone where he might cause injuries to himself or others. ALWAYS give the newsman a complete and courteous explanation of why he must be kept out of a particular area. Make it very plain that you are trying to insure his own safety.

I AM LOOKINK FROM DER VINDER OUDT.....UND KERPOOF ISS DAS BALL OF SHMOKE FROM DER ROOF! IT VAS TERRIBLE! UND DEN ISS COMINK DAS AWFUL KERPOW UND DER FLAMES GESHPITEN TEN TOUSAND FEET IN DER SKY UP! IT VAS HORRIBLE! UND...
NOW, NOW.... MRS. HIMMELGUTZEN. TAKE IT A LITTLE SLOWER. I WANT TO GET ALL THESE QUOTES ACCURATE.
PRESS

If complete information is not available at the time the reporter is at the scene, and he asks to be phoned when other information is available, be sure to honor his request as quickly as possible.

DON'T

Some important DON'TS to keep in mind:

DON'T guess at the cause. A crystal ball is not one of the tools of a Texas Gas employee. Tell the reporter the cause is undetermined if you are not positively sure of what caused the situation.

DON'T guess at a man's injuries. Get the accurate information from the doctor in regard to limbs broken and internal injuries.

DON'T say the pipeline "exploded." Be factual! Refer to a ruptured line as a "line break." Such words as "explosion" create a fear complex on the part of the public toward the natural gas industry.

DON'T say the section of pipeline or the compressor station unit will be out of operation for a certain length of time without pointing out what the company is doing to maintain service during the time the equipment will be out of order. Most important to the newspaper's readers is whether or not they will be without gas service and, if so, for how long. In most cases, alternate equipment will be substituted for

SIR, I REALLY MUST INSIST YOU COME BACK OUT OF THE DANGER AREA. GAS IS STILL ESCAPING AND IF YOUR FLASH EQUIPMENT SETS IT OFF WE'LL HAVE THE WHOLE CONDEMNED CRUDDY MESS OVER AGAIN.

that which is damaged and service will not be interrupted. But, if the company man in charge answers the reporter that the damaged equipment will be inoperative for weeks and does not explain that service will not be affected, the newspaper article may come out with glaring headlines: BLANKTOWN WILL BE WITHOUT GAS TWO WEEKS.

DON'T attempt to estimate the damage in dollars. You may call the damage "extensive" or "minor," but only the operating heads are authorized to comment on the exact valuation of damage. You may also reveal how many compressor units are out of operation, how many feet of pipeline are damaged, etc.

AFTER IT'S OVER

When the danger is over at the emergency site, stop by the newspaper office to see if any more information is needed and thank the reporter if he has written a good story.

Newsmen, like all other humans, appreciate a friendly pat on the back every now and then. This kind of thoughtfulness will help build even better press relations in the future.

WE LIKED YOUR STORY! YOU HAVE A CRISP STYLE..... CONCISE.....COMPREHENSIVE.... TERSE.....REMINISCENT OF HEMINGWAY.
GIGANTIC EXPLO ROCKS
PIPE LINE BLOWS UP!
TREMENDOUS BLAST DAMA

DIRECTORY

Operating Supervisors, Department Heads, and Public Relations Department

Texas Gas Switchboard: 683-2431

	Ext.	Home
W. A. Johnson, Jr. General Superintendent of Operations	213	683-4148
COMPRESSOR DEPARTMENT		
J. B. Eaton, Jr., Superintendent	201	683-7509
T. L. McWilliams, Asst. Superintendent	202	684-4983
PIPELINE DEPARTMENT		
E. F. Hindman, Superintendent	204	684-4600
MEASUREMENT DEPARTMENT		
G. W. Sweet, Superintendent	231	683-0787
DISPATCHING DEPARTMENT		
I. P. Robinson, Superintendent	221	684-4754
Hugh Owen, Asst. Superintendent	225	683-4648
UNDERGROUND STORAGE DEPARTMENT		
Don C. Benson, Director of Storage	438	683-6613
Forrest W. Lewis, Mgr., Underground Gas Storage	435	684-1644
James M. Pruden, Supervisor, Field Storage	430	684-2902
Ralph N. Thomas, Supervisor, Storage Geology	430	683-8722
PUBLIC RELATIONS DEPARTMENT		
John R. Blewer, Director	285	684-3742
John Potter, Mgr., Community Relations	289	684-1311
LOUISIANA DIVISION		
Aaron Griffin, Manager (Lafayette, La.)	235-9065	232-1487
L. T. Sloan, Asst. Manager (Lafayette, La.)	235-9065	235-0393
MEMPHIS DIVISION		
W. O. Davis, Division Manager (Memphis)	398-1356	398-5446

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